

NO. 6 FRANKLIN COUNTY
VOL. I ASHFIELD

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INVENTORY OF CITY AND TOWN ARCHIVES ^c
OF MASSACHUSETTS

No. 6 Franklin County

Vol. I. Ashfield

Prepared by
The Historical Records Survey
Division of Professional and Service Projects
Work Projects Administration

* * * * *

The Historical Records Survey
Boston, Massachusetts
1940

The Historical Records Survey Program

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By authority of a Presidential Letter, the Historical Records Survey was established in January, 1936, under the national direction of Dr. Luther H. Evans, as a federally sponsored project of the Work Projects Administration. Since August 31, 1939, the sponsorship of the Massachusetts unit of the survey has been undertaken by Frederic W. Cook, Secretary of the Commonwealth. Since March, 1940 the individual state projects of the Historical Records Survey have been under the national direction of Sargent B. Child, who, as field representative of Dr. Evans, had had technical supervision of the work of the survey in New England from its inception. The present writer has been in direct charge of the project in Massachusetts from August, 1936 to September, 1940 when he was succeeded by Aron S. Gilmartin.

The purpose of the project is to survey, preserve and render accessible historical source materials of all kinds. Its work has fallen naturally into the following main divisions: public records, private manuscripts, church records, early American imprints, historical portraits and newspapers. Practically all historical material falls under one or another of these divisions. In bringing this material under control certain techniques have been found practicable, depending on the nature of the subject matter, and using variously the methods of the inventory, the guide, the calendar, the check list or the index in the publication of the result. For public records, church records and portraits, the method of the inventory has worked best; for historical manuscripts, the guide or, in rare cases where the material was of unusual importance, the calendar; for imprints, the check list; for newspaper and court records, the index; and so on.

The actual work of gathering information concerning historical materials at their place of storage or custody has in most cases been preceded by a most necessary and, for both the custodian and posterity, important task, that of putting records in order; of cleaning, dusting, re-filing, and treating them; and, in short, doing everything possible to ensure their preservation. This function of the project, often performed by its workers under almost indescribable conditions of dust, filth, dampness, poor ventilation, and even vermin may well be regarded by future generations as a most important contribution of the survey.

Scarcely less important, however, are the editorial processes to which all field information must be subjected before publication. Here gaps and inadequacies are spotted, inconsistencies reconciled, and order brought out of chaos. In the field of public records it has been found necessary not only to sketch briefly the history of the county or town and its government but also to preface the inventory of each subordinate office or institution with an outline of its development, based upon its own records or upon statutory or other sources. In the inventories of

Preface

church records, similarly, the preparation of the history of each church constitutes a task equally arduous with that of locating and listing its records. In Massachusetts two broader works have also been undertaken. The general historical background, statutory origin and functioning of county, city, or town offices have been studied with a view to providing satisfactory accounts of the development of county and municipal government generally. These latter undertakings are now happily nearing completion.

In the field of county records the surveys of eight of the fourteen counties of Massachusetts are nearing completion. In that of municipal records, approximately sixty of 350 cities and towns have been covered to date including several of the more populous. Editorial work is now also proceeding on six of an estimated ten volumes of the inventory of the records of the city of Boston. Some 200 manuscript depositories, large and small, have been surveyed and a preliminary guide to them published. An inventory of the records of Universalist churches in Massachusetts will soon be published, and field work is being carried on in other denominations, particularly in the Unitarian, Congregational, Baptist, and Jewish bodies. A catalogue of portraits painted before 1825 in Massachusetts has been published and editorial work is proceeding on similar listings for the other New England states and New York State. A listing of the publications of the Massachusetts unit of the survey follows at the end of this volume.

The inventory of the town archives of Ashfield is the first in the series of such inventories covering the towns of Franklin County. The field work as well as the historical research for this volume were done principally by Frank Lane and Ethel Cheves. The historical sketch, the sketch of governmental development and the individual office sketches were prepared by Samuel Levenson. Both the field work and the preparation of these sketches was done under the direction of Lincoln E. Ross, supervisor of the Survey in Worcester and Franklin Counties. The inventory was edited and prepared for publication by Morris I. Wartow assisted by George Ferran. The state archives relating to Ashfield were listed by Joseph R. Wyckoff. Final editing was given the volume by the present writer and the Washington office of the survey. The index was prepared under the direction of Leon Ryther. The map, chart of government and cover design were prepared by William Rabinowich and this and the mimeographing work were supervised by Ralph Kahn. The survey is indebted to the town officials of Ashfield for their cooperation and to the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Frederic W. Cook, without whose sponsorship this project would not be possible.

Carl J. Wennerblad
State Supervisor of
Research and Records Projects

FOREWORD

The Inventory of the Town and City Archives of Massachusetts is one of a number of bibliographies of historical materials prepared throughout the United States by workers on the Historical Records Survey of the Work Projects Administration. The publication herewith presented, an inventory of the Archives of Ashfield in Franklin County, is volume I of number 6 of the Massachusetts series.

The Historical Records Survey was undertaken in the winter of 1935-36 for the purpose of providing useful employment to needy unemployed historians, lawyers, teachers, and research and clerical workers. In carrying out this objective, the project was organized to compile inventories of historical materials, particularly the unpublished government documents and records which are basic in the administration of local government, and which provide invaluable data for students of political, economic, and social history. The archival guide herewith presented is intended to meet the requirements of day-to-day administration by town officials, and also the needs of lawyers, business men and other citizens who require facts from the public records for the proper conduct of their affairs. The volume is so designed that it can be used by the historian in his research in unprinted sources in the same way he uses the library card catalogue for printed sources.

The inventories produced by the Historical Records Survey attempt to do more than give merely a list of records--they attempt further to sketch in the historical background of the county or other unit of government, and to describe precisely and in detail the organization and functions of the government agencies whose records they list. The county, town, and city inventories for the entire country will, when completed, constitute an encyclopedia of local government as well as bibliography of local archives.

The successful conclusion of the work of the Historical Records Survey, even in a single town, would not be possible without the support of public officials, historical and legal specialists, and many other groups in the community. Their cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

The Survey was organized and has been directed by Luther H. Evans, and operates as a nation-wide project in the Division of Professional and Service Projects, of which Mrs. Florence Kerr, Assistant Commissioner, is in charge.

F. C. Harrington
Commissioner of Work Projects

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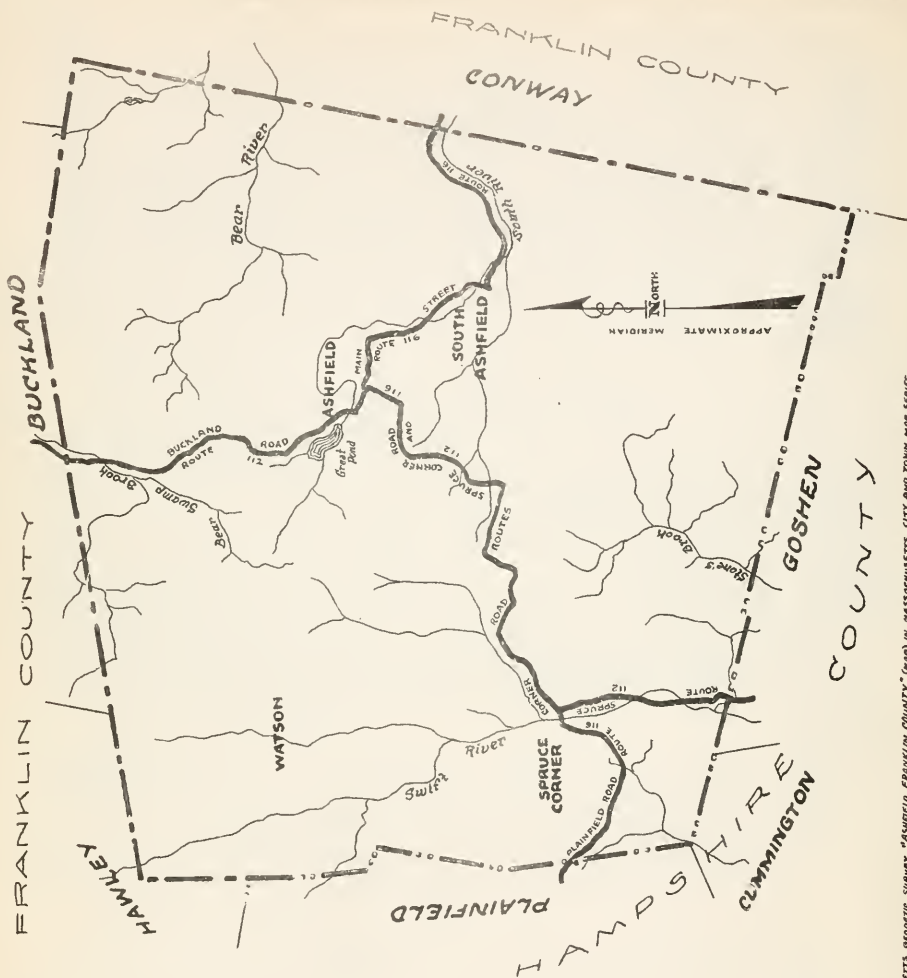
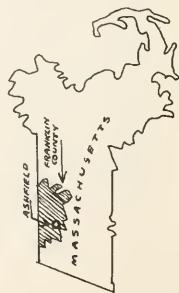
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ASHFIELD BOUNDARIES AT HAMPSHIRE COUNTY



SOURCE: WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION, MASSACHUSETTS GEODETIC SURVEY, "ASHFIELD, FRANKLIN COUNTY" (MAP) IN MASSACHUSETTS CITY AND TOWN MAP SERIES, PUBLISHED BY THE PROJECT, 100 NASHUA STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

PART A. ASHFIELD AND ITS RECORDS SYSTEM

Historical Sketch

At first glance it would appear that there is little to distinguish Ashfield from neighboring towns in the northwest part of the Commonwealth. Its topography is hilly, with little arable land; it has no useful water power, and hence no industries; and its population has declined steadily, so that today it is half of what it was in 1810.¹

Yet there has been something in its climate which has fostered plain living and high thinking. Here, almost at the time of its founding, a small group of Baptists waged a stubborn and historic fight to free themselves from paying taxes to the Congregational Church, the reverberations of which reached the ears of the King of England. Here, in Ashfield's Sanderson Academy, Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College, secured the elements of higher education, and did her first teaching. And here, for a period of forty years, Professor Charles Eliot Norton spent his summers, and participated in no small way in the life of the town. Ashfield is no Athens; but there has been an uncommon amount of lofty speculation there. At worst it has led to unseemly church dissensions; at best it has produced clergymen by the score, educators such as Mary Lyon and G. Stanley Hall, and drawn to it, if only for a summer, a month, or a day, such persons as George William Curtis, Booker T. Washington, William Dean Howells, James Russell Lowell, Josiah Royce, and George W. Cable.

The history of Ashfield begins in 1690, when Captain Ephraim Hunt of Weymouth led a company of men on an expedition against Canada during King William's War. The success of the expedition was so confidently anticipated that no express provision was made for the payment of the troops, and for forty-five years none was made.²

On December 5, 1735, the general court granted Ebenezer Hunt and other soldiers and officers who had taken part in the expedition (or their descendants) a tract of land six miles square "westward of Deerfield." The province, having much land and little money, often used this method of paying its debts. Various conditions were laid down: a plat of the township was to be returned for confirmation within twelve

1. Frederick C. Howes, History of the Town of Ashfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts, From its Settlement in 1742-1910, Also an Historical Sketch of the Town Written by Reverend Thomas Shepard in 1834, published by the town, no date (1912), p. 14

2. Howes, op. cit., pp. 15, 16. See also entry 10

months; the grant was to be divided into sixty-three equal shares, one of which was to be reserved for the first settled minister, another for the ministry, and a third for the school; in each of the other sixty shares, the petitioners were required, within three years, to settle "one good family" in a house eighteen feet square and seven feet high: each "right" must have six acres of land plowed or brought to English grass or fitted for mowing; an orthodox minister must be settled and a meetinghouse erected. In addition, each settler must give a bond of twenty pounds to the province treasurer to guarantee that he would fulfil these conditions; and the rights to unsettled lots were to revert to the province.¹

The grant, as "Surveyed by the Needle of the Instrument" on May 18, 1736 by Nathaniel Kellogg, contained 23,040 acres.² The following month, the general court instructed Captain Adam Cushing to assemble the grantees in order that they might choose a proprietors' clerk, take necessary steps to fulfil the conditions of the grant, and determine how future meetings should be called.³ On December 8, 1736, owing to the fact that the full sixty of these soldiers and their descendants could not be found, the general court allowed a request of the grantees that the deficiency be made up by allowing the claims of "divers of the Volunteers and Impress'd men who Served as Mariners" In addition, the time for fulfilling the terms of the grant was extended to five years.⁴ On January 19, 1737, Kellogg's plat was accepted and confirmed by the general court, provided that it "exceeds not the Quantity of Six Miles Square of Land; and Does not interfere With Any former Grant."⁵ The latter was a reservation which immediately caused considerable trouble, for, during the same year, a committee of the proprietors complained that the proprietors of Deerfield had newly "set out their Westerly bounds" so as to include one-third of the best land of the new township. The general court, on January 10, 1738, ordered the town of Deerfield to lay before it a correct plat of their westerly bounds "so that this Court may further consider this Memorial for their future orders."⁶ There the matter rested for a time.

Meanwhile, on March 13, 1738, the proprietors held their first meeting. They elected a moderator, clerk, collector and treasurer, and a committee of five to lay out lots from fifty to sixty-five acres in size, "According to the Goodness or Meanness of the Land"; also to lay out for a

1. Massachusetts General Court, Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, 1692-1780, 21 vols., Boston, 1869-1922, various state printers, XII, ch. 132, pp. 181-182. Hereafter cited as Province Acts and Resolves

2. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS-TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1735, 1808, ms., p. 2. See entry 8. Hereafter cited as PROPRIETORS' RECORDS

3. Province Acts and Resolves, XII, ch. 40, p. 278

4. Ibid., ch. 87, pp. 299-300

5. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, op. cit., p. 2

6. Province Acts and Resolves, XII, ch. 112, p. 310

meetinghouse, a burying place, and a training field; and to endeavor to settle the boundary line with Deerfield. Finally, it was voted that sixty pounds should be raised to pay the committee's charges in laying out the lots.¹ At an adjourned meeting held April 17 at the house of Adam Cushing in Weymouth, it was further voted that future meetings should be held at John Hubbard's Inn at Braintree, and should be summoned by notices in "public print."² Copies of these public notices, in form much like a town warrant, are to be found in the PROPRIETORS' RECORDS.³

At the second proprietors' meeting, held July 24, 1739, it was voted that thirty pounds should be paid to the first man who should build a saw mill in the township within one year and who should agree to "Saw for the Proprietors for Twenty Shillings per Thousand for Seven years after Said Mill is built."⁴ Sixty lots were drawn;⁵ but it does not appear that any of the proprietors ever settled on their lands in person.⁶

Meanwhile the area between "Hunts town," as the plantation was called, and Hatfield was the subject of a separate grant by the general court. In a petition by John Foster and Edward Shove dated December 11, 1739 soldiers or their descendants who had fought in the war against the Narragansetts and been granted as compensation 15,000 acres at a place called Quabin, stated that their grant fell short of the specified area by eleven or twelve hundred acres because of ponds and low sunken grounds and requested compensation elsewhere. Since this is the area of the great Quabbin Reservoir today, their claim appears to have been justified. At any rate the court in a mood of generosity granted them 3500 acres between Hatfield and Huntstown.⁷ Evidence of another grant exists in the form of a surveyor's report dated June 6, 1740 stating that a boundary of a 600-acre grant to the Reverend Experience Mayhew, minister of the gospel among the Indians at Martha's Vineyard, was a maple tree near the southwest corner of Huntstown.⁸

On May 28, 1741, the proprietors attempted to hasten settlement by voting to give five pounds to the first ten proprietors who would build a house and bring six acres of land under cultivation.⁹ On September 16th a committee of three was elected to take whatever measures were necessary to settle the dispute concerning the boundary line with Deerfield; and another committee of three was elected to find a person

1. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, pp. 13, 16

2. Ibid., p. 16

3. Ibid., pp. 17, 26

4. Ibid., p. 19

5. Ibid., pp. 21-25

6. Howes, op. cit., p. 56

7. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Secretary of State, Massachusetts Archives, 417 vols. in 418, variously titled, mss., CXIV, pp. 475, 477; Province Acts and Resolves, XII, pp. 647, 648. See entries 80, 81

8. Massachusetts Archives, XII, p. 107. See entry 82

9. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 31

to build a saw mill. One hundred and twenty pounds might be drawn from the treasury for the purpose of encouraging a builder.¹

It was about this time that the first settlers arrived in Ashfield. Many of these were Baptists; Chileab Smith, whose name appears often in this chronicle, was one. The land being hilly, they engaged mainly in grazing, dairying and the raising of corn.²

The proprietors of "Hunts town", met again on September 3, 1742 at Hadley and elected a committee of three to repair the road branching from the Hatfield-Deerfield highway, and to extend it as far into Huntstown as they deemed proper. Evidently no one had yet come forward to build a saw mill for they ordered that a whip saw be purchased at their expense.³

By the time they met again, on October 14, 1742, certain matters had come up in the general court which required their attention. Early in 1741/2, their representative, Adam Cushing, informed the court that the township had been surveyed and divided into lots, that several proprietors had settled there- which would seem to be an exaggeration -and that a place for the location of the meetinghouse had been found in the easterly part of the township. He now complained that, when they were about to perambulate the town, they made application to Deerfield to show them their west bounds, but were refused. Consequently, they were obliged to search out the bounds themselves. The Deerfield plat newly confirmed by the court, Cushing stated, infringed on certain lots which the Huntstown proprietors were clearing and settling. He prayed that the court fix the bounds between the two towns. On March 25, 1742, the court ordered that the petitioners should serve Deerfield with a copy of the complaint, and that Deerfield, in turn, should show cause at the next May session why the prayer should not be granted. But on June 2, 1742, the court, having discovered that the town of Deerfield had not been duly notified of the complaint, postponed action and ordered that notice be given.⁴ Under date of June 1st, Elijah Williams, a selectman of Deerfield, replied that the Deerfield plat had been confirmed by the general court and, although Deerfield would not oppose the appointment of a committee to fix the boundaries with Huntstown provided the expenses were paid by the latter town, the case would be more amenable to judicial settlement by the common law than by action of the general court.⁵

1. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, pp. 33-34

2. Howes, op. cit., p. 14

3. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 42

4. Massachusetts Archives, CXIV, pp. 700-701; Province Acts and Resolves, XIII, p. 95. See entry 83

5. Massachusetts Archives, CXIV, pp. 703-704. See entry 84

In order to press this suit further, the proprietors of Huntstown appointed Richard Faxon to assist Nathaniel Kellogg in petitioning the general court. At the same time, they endorsed the desire of one Ebenezer Hunt of Weymouth to secure a share in whatever "equivalent" lands might be set off to them.¹ On December 9, 1742, the court acted upon the petition. As recompense for the 5362 acres of land taken by Deerfield, it granted Nathaniel Kellogg and Richard Faxon, representing the proprietors of Huntstown, almost eight thousand acres of unappropriated land lying on the north and west of the township, and, since they had been "impeded in their settlement by the town of Deerfield as within mentioned, voted that they be allowed two years longer to fulfill the conditions of the Grant."² To Ebenezer Hunt, who showed that he had been at great cost to obtain the grant of the original township, they gave an equal share in the additional land, provided that he performed the conditions laid upon the original grantees.³ The resolve was passed March 2, 1744; in addition to describing the boundaries of the additional grant, the general court ordered "the Salmon fishing falls in Deerfield River So Called be reserved to the use of publick with Twenty Acres of Land Around them for Conveniency of fishing" ⁴

Having settled the matter of the saw mill, the proprietors, on December 22, 1743, voted "That they will Proceed this Present year to build a Corn Mill", and elected a committee "to agree with any person or persons that shall or may appeare to build said Mill. The Com'ttee have liberty and Power to Convey to the Person or Persons So Undertaking One Hundred Acres of Land Adjoining to and including the Place where the Mill stands."⁵ No such person was found, however, until April 1753, when one John Blackmer promised to fulfill the conditions, and was thereupon granted the hundred acres.⁶

The building of the meetinghouse was also attended with difficulties and delays. In 1744, construction was suspended owing to "great Expectations of a War with France" ⁷ In 1753, fifty pounds was voted for the purpose.⁸ Eight years later on December 9, 1761, the proprietors decided to build the meetinghouse as rapidly as possible and elected a committee to "complete the same so far as to set up and cover it and glas

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1. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 47
 2. Massachusetts Archives, CXIV, pp. 1-2. See entry 85
 3. Province Acts and Resolves, XIII, ch. 125, p. 182
 4. Ibid., ch. 261, pp. 340-341; also in Massachusetts Archives, CXIV, p. 213. See entry 86.
 5. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 59
 6. Ibid., p. 76
 7. Ibid., p. 66
 8. Ibid., p. 78

it and lay the floor."¹ The following July 7th the location of the meeting-house was changed to the thirteenth lot on the north end;² on October 27th, it was voted that it should be forty-eight feet long and thirty-six feet wide;³ Work was not begun, however, until the following year;⁴ On December 11, 1765, by which time Huntstown had become the town of Ashfield, additional money was raised in order to proceed with the building.⁵ On July 13, 1766 the proprietors refused to revoke their vote altering the location of the meetinghouse,⁶ which had apparently been done in response to a rising clamor from new settlers who were locating in the southern and western end of the village. At a town meeting held August 10, 1767, the residents voted "not to concur with the Proprietor's vote to cover the meetinghouse where it stands."⁷ The residents won the argument, for on November 4, 1767, the proprietors voted to move the frame of the meetinghouse to the northerly end of Lot No. 18.⁸ The business ended temporarily on a well-worn theme: On August 17, 1768, a committee was elected "to go forward with building the Meetinghouse."⁹

Much the same sort of slow and tortuous progress was made in the matter of securing a minister. On April 4, 1753, a committee was elected to hire a minister. At least one sermon had been heard in the township, however, for it was voted at the same time that the treasurer pay the minister who had already preached there.¹⁰ On November 20, 1751, a sum of money was appropriated for preaching during the next six months,¹¹ but a settled minister was not to appear for another twelve years. On October 27, 1762, the proprietors voted to grant a salary of sixty pounds to the first orthodox minister to settle in Huntstown.¹² Still it was not until July 20, 1763, that they engaged the Rev. Mr. Sherwin, at an annual salary of sixty-four pounds and fire wood.¹³

There were valid reasons for these delays. One of them is indicated by the petition, dated March 3, 1756, of Chileab Smith "in behalf of the Inhabitants of the Plantation called Hunts Town." Graphically it set forth:

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1. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 93
 2. Ibid., p. 97
 3. Ibid., p. 98
 4. Howes, op. cit., p. 39
 5. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, r. 104
 6. Idem
 7. Howes, op. cit., p. 77
 8. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 165
 9. Ibid., p. 106
 10. Ibid., p. 54
 11. Ibid., p. 92
 12. Ibid., p. 97
 13. Ibid., p. 101

"Once and again that the enemy was near upon us even within a few hours travel which afterwards we found to be really true then had we to flee for our lives (for want of a common defense allowed to other frontiers) with our wives and children leaving our houses as they were throwing our household stooft (stuff) into the weeds and bushes to hide them from the enemy and so to sojourn where we could find a place. In this our great distress we went many times to the Hon. Col. Israel William (s) as our father for protection but he not willing to put the country to charge afforded us no help save that he sent a guard of about ten men Tuesdays to help us gather part of our crops. Thus have we been for near two years our women and children the most of the time scattered amongst strangers, we that were men, many of us, after going or sending to Mr. Williams for help and could get none was forced to come to work on our own lands without a guard save what we made among ourselves, one of us spending a considerable time in the woods of hunts Town to see if he could see or track the enemy. We therefore in great distress do pray his Excellency and Honors as our fathers to take some pity on us and give us some protection as you in your wisdom shall think fit."

The petition stated that Huntstown was eight miles west of Deerfield and fifteen miles to the northwest of Hatfield; and that the whole number of settlers was eighty-three, of whom twenty-nine dwelt in the village and fifty-four were "scattered away from Huntstown in need of protection."¹ The plea was reiterated July 3, 1756² and on July 8, 1756, the general court responded by asking the lieutenant-governor to give directions to Col. Israel Williams to protect this frontier.³ A belated petition from the inhabitants of sections neighboring upon Huntstown, stating that Huntstown's request "is evidently reasonable to all who are acquainted with their distressed circumstances", reached the general court shortly thereafter.⁴ On April 8, 1757, the general court took these and many similar petitions into account when it established garrisons for the eastern and western frontiers, provided bounties for Indian captives and scalps, and furnished pay and subsistence for officers and soldiers.⁵

On February 26, 1760, Chileab Smith and other inhabitants of Huntstown confronted the general court with new problems:

"We would inform you then that we agreeable to the courts commend in the grant of the township have settled on our lands

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1. Massachusetts Archives, CXVII, pp. 113-114. See entry 87
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116, See entry 88
 3. Province Acts and Resolves, XV, ch. 95, p. 567
 4. Massachusetts Archives, CXVII, p. 117. See entry 89
 5. Province Acts and Resolves, XV, ch. 448, p. 707

expecting others of the Proprietors would do the like but they refusing we have been distressed with the war, were forced to build a town fort upon our own cost our town being very uneven our charge of highways is extreme great lying chiefly on the inhabitants but we leave his Excellency and your Honors to judge of the enumerable difficulties that must necessarily lie upon us while we are so few in number, and we would only mention to you in this our distress we petitioned to the Proprietors in a legal meeting for three things, (viz) to see if they would help pay for the town fort, 2. to see if they would pay for a necessary bridge over a small river in the midst of the town, 3. to see if they would settle their lands all which was totally denied us, we do therefore present our most humble request to this court as the last human help we have to flee to, earnestly desiring you would oblige the non-residents immediately to settle their land or give the land to others that would, that we may enjoy the privileges of a civil and sacred nature as a christian town belonging to our King."¹

On March 21, the general court ordered the proprietors to show cause at the next May session why this prayer should not be granted.² Apparently an amicable settlement was reached thereafter, for no further legislative action was taken.

The first of the highways mentioned by Chileab Smith was laid out in 1754, and approximated the "old road" through Conway to Conway Village, then over Baptist Hill to Mr. Kendrick's pasture, then westerly to a point close to the saw mill near the present Bear River Bridge.³ In 1761 this road was extended across various house lot numbers to the corn mill, then "along No. 18" to the east and west road previously mentioned; it approximates the main street of Ashfield today. On the same day a road was laid out northerly from the saw mill on Bear River probably as far as No Town.⁴ About 1766 a road was built from Whately to Ashfield, part of which went through Conway along the same path laid out in 1754.⁵ By 1795 four county roads ran through the town.⁶

Boundary lines continued to remain in doubt. In response to a petition from Funtstown that the "equivalent" land granted by the court in 1742⁷ "did not pass the Chair" by some accident, the general court, on January 28, 1763, appointed a committee to ascertain the bounds of Deerfield and Funtstown according to the original grants.⁸ Upon the basis of

1. Massachusetts Archives, CXVII, pp. 570-571. See entry 90

2. Idem

3. Howes, op. cit., p. 75

4. Ibid., p. 76

5. Ibid., p. 110

6. Idem

7. See p. 72

8. Province Acts and Resolves, XVII, ch. 175, p. 302

the committee's report, the general court, on June 15, 1764, passed a resolution describing the west line of Deerfield, and awarding money to the committeemen for their services.¹ A new survey of the township of Huntstown was made by Eleazar Nash on August 1, 1764. It showed that the section contained 23,040 acres, and was accepted by the court on June 18, 1765.² The town's present area, 24,601.5 acres -- a little over six miles square -- is practically the same.³

There were other problems. One concerned the finances of the plantation, which were in such a parlous state that, on February 15, 1765, the general court, upon petition of Nathaniel Kellogg, representing the inhabitants of Huntstown, felt constrained to order the province treasurer to stay an execution against the constables and collectors of Huntstown until the next May sessions. It also requested the assessors to return a sworn list of the polls and real and personal estates of all the inhabitants.⁴

By 1765 Huntstown plantation had become so well populated that the inhabitants felt that incorporation would "greatly contribute to the growth thereof, and remedy many inconveniences to which the inhabitants and proprietors may be otherwise subjected" Consequently, on June 21, 1765, the plantation was "erected into a town by the name of Ashfield . . . invested with all the powers, privileges and immunities which the inhabitants of the towns within this province do enjoy."⁵ Governor Bernard selected this name in honor of his friend Lord Thurlow, of Ashfield, England.⁶ That the beauty or number of ash trees in the section had a bearing on the choice is a pretty legend, but probably no more than that.

Thomas Williams was directed to issue a warrant calling the first town meeting of inhabitants "qualified by law to vote in town affairs . . . to chuse all such officers as are or shall be required by law to manage the affairs of said town."⁷ A copy of this warrant has been preserved, and reads as follows:

"Hampshire ss. To Mr. Samuel Belding of Ashfield in said County Greeting

"Whereas the Great and General Court of this Province did

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1. Province Acts and Resolves, XVII, ch. 88, pp. 548-550
 2. Ibid., XVIII, ch. 44, p. 27
 3. Howes, op. cit., p. 14
 4. Province Acts and Resolves, XVII, ch. 240, p. 613
 5. Ibid., ch. 13, p. 815; Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII, pp. 135, 136. See entry 91
 6. Howes, op. cit., p. 73
 7. Province Acts and Resolves, IV, ch. 13, sec. 2., p. 815

at their Session in June last pass (sic) by an act of said Court Erect the Plantation called Huntstown in the county aforesaid into a town by the name of Ashfield Investing the Inhabitants thereof with all the Powers Privileges and Immunities which the Inhabitants of the towns within this Province do enjoy, And at the same time Impowered the subscriber one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County aforesaid to issue my warrant for calling the first meeting

"These are therefore in his majestys name to require you forthwith to notify and warn the Inhabitants of Ashfield afores'd, qualified according to law to vote in town meetings to assemble themselves together and meet at the house of Mr. Joseph Mitchell Innholder in Ashfield afores'd, upon Monday the sixth day of January next at nine of the Clock in the morning, Then and there after a Moderstor being chose, To choose all such officers as are or shall be sufficient warrant.

"Given under my hand and seal, this twenty first day of December 1765.

Thos. Williams."¹

The third section of the act of incorporation ordered:

"That all taxes already raised . . . be levied on the several proprietors of said plantation, according to their interests, until the further order of this court; and that said inhabitants and proprietors of said town proceed by the same rules, in levying and collecting said taxes, as proprietors in new plantations are obliged, by law, to observe."²

With obvious logic, the proprietors in February 1768 informed the general court that this clause left uncertain "whether they shall proceed as a Town or Propriety", that by reason of this uncertainty they were unable to levy or collect any part of two taxes previously voted and that "meetings of said Proprietors have ceased and without aid of this court they can not go on to complete settlement of said town." The proprietors requested that the act of incorporation be amended to indicate how proprietors' meetings should be summoned. Furthermore, it was requested that the proprietors should be empowered to levy and collect taxes, including the two taxes already levied, equally upon each 250-acre right.³ The petition was granted by the house, but rejected by the council.⁴ The plea

1. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), 1766-75, ms., p. 5.
See entry 29

2. Province Acts and Resolves, IV, ch. 13, sec. 3, p. 815

3. Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII, pp. 336-338. See entry 92

4. Idem

was immediately renewed,¹ and on June 15 of the same year the court agreed that the act of incorporation should be amended so as to enable the proprietors to elect a clerk, treasurer, assessors and whatever other officers they deemed necessary; and, more importantly, it allowed them to levy and collect money upon each right, with the privilege - which was immediately exercised - of selling the land of those proprietors and inhabitants failing to pay the two taxes previously levied.²

The inhabitants of Ashfield put forth "a significant . . . series of efforts to secure that religious liberty which, to-day, is the boast of our Commonwealth."³ The resulting controversy was finally settled only by intervention of the King of England, and drew an opinion from the Lords of Trade, sitting in London, on May 13, 1771, to the effect that "This Clause, whereby all persons of whatever sect or persuasion in religion are equally and indiscriminately taxed for the support of the Independent Church therein established, is in our opinion equally unusual and unreasonable particularly in the case of the Sect commonly called the Antipedobaptists, it appearing that out of seventeen families of which this Township, at its first settlement consisted, twelve of them were of the above sect or persuasion."⁴ The account of this affair will now be given in some detail.

While the amendment to the incorporation act was still being discussed, certain residents of Ashfield, nearly half of whom had settled in Huntstown before the last war, and for three years had defended the township against Indian raids, informed the court on May 24, 1768 that:-

"We, being Anabaptists, proceeded to settle ourselves in a church form, settled a minister who was ordained by the assistance of three neighboring churches of the same constitution and were about building a Meeting House but were forced to desist because of there settling in town of a number of men of a contrary persuasion who by the help of some few who were here before and other Proprietors have by a major vote raised money to build another Meeting House which we have no privilege of and have settled another minister and have given him a large settlement and salary, and compell us to pay our equal proportion with them. They have also voted 4 pounds upon each right to fix up their Meeting House and support

1. Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII, pp. 365-367. See entry 95
 2. Province Acts and Resolves, IV, ch. 5, p. 1015; Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII, pp. 365-367. See entry 95

3. Ibid., IV, note on p. 1016

4. Idem

their minister which if we are obliged to pay, we see nothing but that we, or at least many of us must be turned out from our houses and lands and therefore we pray that his Excellency and your Honors would take our distress case into your wise consideration and free us and our lands from paying any more toward the maintenance of the minister or finishing the meeting house of a society that we do not belong unto. We being willing to pay our province taxes and all others excepting the above mentioned There is upwards of ninety souls that frequently attend our meeting on the Lords Day."¹

On June 1, 1768, the general court ordered that the town and proprietors of Ashfield be notified to show cause why the prayer should not be granted, and suspended tax collections until its next sitting.² On June 9, 1768, certain Congregationalist inhabitants of Ashfield informed the general court that they had no objection to the Anabaptist Society being set free from paying for the maintenance of a form of worship to which they did not subscribe.³ The general court was next informed by Nathan Chapin and Chileab Smith that they had delivered a copy of the Anabaptists' petition to the clerk of the proprietors of Ashfield on June 16, 1768.⁴ Early in 1769, Ebenezer Smith and Reuben Ellis repeated the complaint of the Anabaptists in somewhat more detail. In an "Account of the Sufferings of the Anabaptist Church in Ashfield" they stated that their church had been established June 27, 1761, that their minister had been ordained August 20, 1761, and that they now had thirty communicants. They claimed that they had been granted no funds for their own meeting house and minister, that they had been heavily taxed for the maintenance of a society to which they did not belong, and that legal action brought before the court at Springfield had been unfairly handled.⁵ A similar petition dated May 22, 1769, informed the court that its order suspending tax collections had been ignored, that the opposition had "voted more money to be paid out by us and posted our lands for sale but when the day of public vendue came, having suspicion they had not acted according to law, they stopped action but seem to feel confident they can force us to pay or sell our lands . . . It is useless to complain for those in authority say they will not be of assistance as we are of a different faith." The petition concluded with a request that the money they had paid "for their minister and meetinghouse may be restored to us for our minister and meetinghouse and that we may be free from paying more to a society to which we do not belong."⁶

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1. Massachusetts Archives, XIV, pp. 512-513. See entry 93
 2. Idem
 3. Ibid., p. 557. See entry 94
 4. Ibid., p. 563. See entry 96
 5. Ibid., pp. 558-560. See entry 99
 6. Ibid., pp. 561-562. See entry 97

The Baptist barrage continued with a statement sent by the Baptist Association, which met at Warren, Rhode Island on September 14, 1769, that they had examined the principles and constitution of the church in Ashfield under the pastoral care of Rev. Ebenezer Smith, and that they accepted "the church into fellowship as being of the same faith and order."¹

On February 9, 1770, the Ashfield Baptists repeated their complaint that they were in imminent danger of having their lands sold on the first Wednesday in April, the court's order being totally ignored.² In response to this appeal the house of representatives on April 3d resolved that the clerk of the proprietors be served with a copy of the petition of the Ashfield Baptists in order that they might appear at the next sitting of the general court to show cause why the petition should not be granted, and stayed the sale of the petitioners' lands. The council sanctioned the measure with an amendment: "Provided the same be not already sold." The house refused to concur; then resolved, on April 10, 1770, that the petitioners should present the proprietors with a copy of the petition and also the paper accompanying it, entitled "An Account of the Sufferings of the Church in Ashfield", in order that they might show cause why the prayer should not be granted. Meantime, they ordered that the sale of the petitioners' lands be stayed. The council concurred on the same day, and the governor added his consent on April 26, 1770.³

By this time the matter of the Ashfield Baptists had become a cause celebre. Its importance was well stated in another petition from a grievance committee of the Baptist Churches, which argued that "some of the laws of this Province which are ecclesiastical in nature, deprive us of a charter, privilege, etc., especially one law made in favor of the Proprietors of the town of Ashfield, which supercedes all Acts of the General Court enacted." The committee stated that 398 acres of land had already been sold, part of which had belonged to Ebenezer Smith, one of the original defenders of the town against Indians. It desired, among other things, perpetual exemption of all dissenting churches from ministerial taxes, and repeal of the amendment to the act of incorporation. The court, on November 14 and 15, again ordered that the clerk of the proprietors be served with a copy of this petition in order that they might appear to show cause why it should not be granted, and temporarily stayed all proceedings under the amending act.⁴

The controversy now became acrimonious indeed. The answer, dated March 27, 1771, of the proprietors to the petition of the Baptist grievance committee ran to four closely written pages. It stated, among other things, that "natural rights" did not apply to matters of taxation and that the

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1. Massachusetts Archives, XIV, p. 564. See entry 98
 2. Ibid., p. 556. See entry 100
 3. Ibid., pp. 564A, 564B. See entry 101
 4. Ibid., pp. 592-595. See entry 102

separatist churches were nothing more than "a kind of receptacle for scandalous and disorderly Christians . . . a sink for some of the filth of Christianity in this part of the county." Such epithets as "pride", "vanity", "prejudice", "impurity", were used freely. On a more cogent plane, the proprietors argued that the petitioners had benefited equally from the taxes for which the Baptist lands had been sold.¹ The general court on April 17, 1771, appointed a committee of three to consider the matter, hear the parties, and report what should be done.²

Fuel was added to the fire from another direction, when Benjamin Beal and other proprietors of land in Ashfield, probably nonresidents, also protested to the general court against allowing the proprietors to assess taxes and sell the lands of delinquent owners. They "apprehend this way of raising and collecting monies is attended with great expence and much wrong thereby oft-times done to the poor, the Widow & the Fatherless. And inasmuch as the said Proprietors have paid within eight or ten years past about fifteen hundred pounds lawful Money Praying that they may be relieved."³ On April 12, 1771, the general court again ordered the proprietors of Ashfield to show cause at the next session why the prayer should not be granted, and meanwhile stayed all proceedings in consequence of the controverted act.⁴

Shortly after, the committee appointed by the general court to consider the complaint of the Baptist grievance committee handed in its report. Although "desirous of doing everything possible for persons of every denomination of Christians," the committee, nevertheless found that "in the sale of these lands there was no unfairness shown but every transaction was fair, neighborly and legal." Consequently, it recommended that the petition be dismissed. On April 24, 1771, the council accepted the report, but the house, on the following day, took direct exception by appointing a new committee to draw up an act voiding the disputed statute. The council, persisting in its stand, refused to concur.⁵

By this time, the repercussions of the controversy had reached the mother country. A Baptist minister in London, Samuel Stennett, a friend of George III, petitioned the Lords of Trade to annul the act; the King and his Council, on July 31, 1771, did so.⁶ Governor Thomas Hutchinson, having received the order of the King "disallowing and rejecting" the controversial amendment in a letter dated October 18, 1771, stated that he had given public notification to all persons concerned in order that they might govern themselves accordingly.⁷

1. Massachusetts Archives, pp. 596-603. See entry 103

2. Ibid., pp. 592-595. See entry 102

3. Province Acts and Resolves, XVIII, ch. 62, p. 495

4. Idem

5. Massachusetts Archives, XIV, pp. 604-608. See entry 104

6. Howes, op. cit., pp. 85-86

7. Massachusetts Archives, XXVII, p. 248. See entry 105

Despite the intercession of the King, the committee newly appointed by the general assembly felt that the poverty of the community did not allow for any wholesale return of the property that had been sold for taxes. It said that the proprietors had spent much of the money which had been raised in applications to the general court, in lawsuits respecting town boundaries, and in laying out highways; that Rev. Mr. Sherwin had not received his salary for several years; and that "There are about 75 families settled in said town, many of Baptist persuasion, both denominations poor . . ." Consequently, the committee recommended that sales made from 1763 through 1765 be adjudged valid, but that sales made in 1770 might be redeemed, on the payment of taxes and costs, by the original owners. It advised also that a tax of two pence per acre be laid on all lands in the township, but that the Baptists be excused from future taxation for finishing the meetinghouse and supporting the minister. In April 1772 the house and council agreed to postpone action on this matter until the next session.¹ In June of the same year, the general court appointed a new committee to take the matter again into consideration, and report what should be done.² This committee reaffirmed the recommendations of the previous committee in all respects, but excepted the Baptists from the two-pence tax, and provided that a committee be set up to determine redemption prices and that the town should be exempted from all province and county taxes for a period of three years. On July 1, 1772, the general court accepted the report.³ A week later, the court, realizing that the bill incorporating this report would probably not reach final passage at its present session, ordered that all legal actions looking to recovery of land should be stayed temporarily and that no new actions should be entered.⁴

The matter was, however, now well on its way to settlement. In a resolution passed February 5, 1773, the general court appointed, as promised, a committee of three to repair to the town of Ashfield, to hear the proprietors and persons whose land had been sold in 1763, 1764, and 1765 for nonpayment of taxes, to determine what the land was worth at the time of sale, and to decide what the damages should be. The committee was enjoined to report at the next session of the court which sales were valid. Meantime, all legal proceedings to recover the sold land were to be stayed.⁵

An act passed March 6 described the duties of the committee more broadly: the committee was to ascertain what was due to the Reverend Mr. Sherwin from the proprietors; it was empowered to assess lands, appoint tax collectors, and pay Mr. Sherwin, provided that the Baptists had no

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1. Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII or CXIV, pp. 575-577. See entry 106
 2. Idem
 3. Ibid., CXVIII or CXIV, pp. 578-580. See entry 107.
 4. Province Acts and Resolves, XVIII, ch. 68, p. 654
 5. Massachusetts Archives, CXVIII, pp. 672, 673, 673A; also Province Acts and Resolves, XVIII, ch. 129, pp. 681, 682. See entry 108

voice concerning the money collected for him, and to sell lands of delinquent proprietors. The Baptists were exempted from paying for finishing the meetinghouse or supporting Mr. Sherwin and if they had paid more than their share of town charges, were to be reimbursed. The town was exempted from paying county and province taxes for three years.¹

The resolve settling the dispute was passed on June 23, 1773. It validated all sales concluded from 1763 through 1765, on condition that the new owners pay to the old whatever additional sums the land was worth, as determined by the committee, above the amount of taxes for which they were sold. In addition, the special committee appointed by the court was empowered to assess the lands of delinquent proprietors in order to pay the expenses of their agent, Daniel Williams, who had represented them in Boston.² The last step, chronologically, in the progress of the Baptists towards securing equal religious privileges was not taken, however, until March 9, 1774, when minor corrections were made to the previous act. Since the proprietors still had no officers except a collector, they were empowered to hold meetings for the choice of officers, under the general laws pertaining to proprietors.³ Henceforth, the proprietors played little part in the life of the community, although meetings continued until April 11, 1803.⁴ Further divisions of lots were, however, drawn in 1762, 1770, 1782 and 1783.⁵

The Baptist controversy was hardly settled before the town was called upon to meet the demands of the conflict with England. It responded with vigor. In 1775 the town meeting voted "to make the coats that are asinde (assigned) to us. Voted to send a man to Albanah (Albany) to procure Guns and ammunition upon the town credit."⁶ The following year the selectmen were paid three pounds and nine shillings by the province for provisions supplied to the army.⁷ In 1777 seven or eight local Tories were confined under guard for a period of a week. Subsequently, some of these men were fined rather heavily.⁸ The local minister, Rev. Nehemiah Porter, joined the revolutionists.⁹ In all, Ashfield sent 173 men to war at various times and for various periods, of whom four became captains.¹⁰ It elected

1. Province Acts and Resolves, V, ch. 30, p. 228

2. Ibid., XVIII, ch. 37, p. 726

3. Ibid., ch. 24, p. 331. For additional comment on, and discussion of, the entire affair, see also ibid., IV, pp. 1035, ff; V, pp. 278-279, 371-375.

4. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS, p. 134

5. Ibid., pp. 96, 109, 115, 117

6. Quoted from the town records in Howes, op. cit., p. 227

7. Province Acts and Resolves, XIX, ch. 953, p. 370

8. Howes, op. cit., p. 228

9. Ibid., p. 229

10. Ibid., pp. 230-231

committees of correspondence each year from 1776 through 1781; the number of members varied from four to twelve.¹ In 1785, upon representation by the selectmen that they had secured their full quota of recruits for the Continental Army and that the fine set against the town in 1783 for a deficiency of one man was therefore unjust, the general court cancelled the fine.²

In 1786 the majority of the townspeople sided with the insurgents in Shays' Rebellion. An officer and a company of men was raised to assist Daniel Shays, and it is alleged that, by majority vote of the selectmen, the town arsenal was handed over to the rebels. In all, fifty Ashfield men participated more or less actively in assisting Shays.³

The town's pacificism in the war of 1812 is equally clear. It culminated in a vote of the town meeting in 1813, to petition the general court "to adopt constitutional measures to put a speedy stop to this unrighteous and oppressive war we are engaged in and prevent such oppression in the future."⁴

Early Ashfield residents were mainly occupied in raising corn for their own subsistence and hay for their small herds of stock. In 1766 these numbered 35 oxen, 31 cows, 17 horses, 72 swine, and, strangely enough, 188 sheep.⁵ By 1821, rye, oats and wheat were being raised in quantity, but corn remained the primary crop.⁶ The town was slow in turning to the production of apples, potatoes, butter and cheese, but these have now become the main products.⁷ In 1880 an Ashfield Cooperative Creamery Association was formed which, in 1910 produced 150,000 pounds of butter.⁸

1. RECORDS - TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1776-1940, 6 vols., mss., I, pp. 1, 3, 39. See entry 12. Hereafter cited as TOWN RECORDS.

2. Massachusetts General Court, Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1780-1805, 13 vols., Boston, 1890-1898, Laws, 1785, ch. 135, p. 394. Hereafter the laws will be cited as follows: The session laws of 1780-1838 as Laws; of 1839-1914, as Acts; of 1915-1919, as General Acts or Special Acts; of 1919 to date as Acts. Resolves will be cited as Resolves, or Special Resolves. For full citation of publications of statutes see List of Sources at end of volume

3. Howes, op. cit., p. 91

4. Ibid., p. 93

5. Ibid., p. 119

6. Ibid., p. 120

7. Ibid., pp. 120-121

8. Ibid., pp. 126-127

During the entire nineteenth century, many individual enterprises flourished in Ashfield, as was true of most of the self-sustaining communities in the section. Most notable and important was the raising of peppermint and the distilling of the plant into oil. It was begun by Samuel Ranney about 1812, and by 1821 five distilleries were in operation in the town.¹ By 1830, the number of distilleries had doubled and the essences not only of peppermint but also of spearmint, hemlock, spruce, tansy and other plants were distilled. Ashfield lads by the score became drummers or peddlers through the New England country carrying baskets of essences on one side of the saddle and a tin trunk of "Yankee notions" on the other. When, however, an Ashfield man began the production of peppermint oil in Phelps, New York, a general exodus from Ashfield commenced. Many of the leading families departed; it is not too much to say that the decline in population beginning about this time was caused by this general migration.²

There were numerous other industries as well. Sawmills, tanneries, grist mills, plane shops, carding and fulling mills flourished throughout the century.³ Pottery was manufactured in South Ashfield. Two companies, Selden and Perkins, and Bement and Belding, put out shirts, linen bosoms and collars for the women of the town to make. Their products were valued in 1845 at \$12,000.⁴ In the same year, \$3000 worth of braided palm leaf hats were produced.⁵ Other products of the town in that period included wool hats, sandpaper, and wooden splints for limb fractures.⁶

Since most of these industries were small, and some depended entirely on mere part-time or seasonal work of persons in the vicinity, they proved unable to stem the gradual but persistent migration away from Ashfield. In 1776 the population was 628; in 1790 it was 1,459; in 1800 it was 1,741; in 1810 it was 1,809. This was the peak year. In 1820 the population was 1,748; in 1840 it was 1,610; in 1860 it was 1,302; in 1880, it was 1,066; in 1900, it was 955. The population has remained approximately stationary since then. Although the census of 1930 gave Ashfield a population of 860, the state counts in both 1825 and 1935 indicated a somewhat larger population: 919 in 1925, and 918 in 1935.⁷

1. See also article on peppermint raising in Hampshire Gazette, June 6, 1827. The most complete file of this newspaper, published in Northampton from 1786 to date under slightly varying titles, will be found in the Forbes Library in that city

2. Hewes, op. cit., p. 104

3. Ibid., pp. 122-124

4. Ibid., p. 126

5. Idem

6. Ibid., p. 26

7. These population figures are taken from federal and state censuses and are summarized in the following work: Massachusetts Bureau of the Statistics of Labor, Census of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1905, 4 vols., Boston, 1909, I, p. 810. The figure for 1935 is found in Secretary of State The Decennial Census, 1935, Boston, 1936, p. 12

At the first town meeting, held in 1766, the sum of four pounds was voted for the use of the schools.¹ In 1772 it was voted to divide the town into three school districts;² by 1834, the number of school districts had risen to fourteen, and was not reduced to ten until 1878.³ There are now eight elementary schools in Ashfield, with enrollments ranging from nine to nineteen.⁴ The amount appropriated for schooling in 1799 was four hundred pounds, and in 1811 five hundred dollars.⁵ This can be compared with the 1936 school appropriation of \$22,400 of which about half was derived from local taxation.⁶ Until 1792, Springfield was the nearest post office. In that year, an office was established at Northampton, and a few years later one at Worthington. In 1798 a private weekly post ran between Northampton and Hawley, with a stop at Ashfield.⁷ People were, however, generally obliged to travel eighteen miles to get their mail until 1814, when a post office was established in Ashfield.⁸ The partial completion of the Troy and Greenfield Railroad in 1867 allowed the opening of a stage route to Shelburne Falls, which speeded deliveries greatly.⁹ Branch post offices were opened in South Ashfield about 1866, at Spruce Corner in 1888, and at Watson in 1898.¹⁰

A pauper farm was established in 1839. It was sold and replaced by another in 1874.¹¹

Despite, and perhaps because of, its isolation from other communities there was no lack of spiritual ferment in Ashfield. Most of it found expression in church controversies, which are treated elsewhere, but there were also broad secular questions which agitated the populace. In the first place, a great number of townspeople, strongly favoring temperance, fought the custom, established in 1830, of holding town meetings in a second-story room of John Williams' dwelling and tavern. The fight was, for the most part, unavailing.¹² Again, the astonishing election in 1850 of Hosea Blake as state representative from Ashfield, engineered by a free soil coalition group, aroused protest from some of the townspeople. They petitioned the general court to annul it on the grounds of fraud, and a committee appointed by that court upheld their point of view. Blake was finally allowed to be seated.¹³ Shortly afterward, a "Know

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1. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 8.
 2. Ibid., p. 20
 3. TOWN RECORDS, II, p. 349; IV, p. 319
 4. Annual Reports, 1936, p. 44
 5. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 140, 229
 6. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF ASHFIELD, 1869-1940, 3 vols., 1 folder, 10 pamphlets, published annually by the town; 1936, p. 40. See entry 2
 7. Howes, op. cit., p. 114
 8. Ibid., p. 115
 9. Ibid., pp. 116-117
 10. Ibid., p. 117
 11. Ibid., p. 262
 12. Ibid., pp. 256-258
 13. Ibid., p. 218. See also Acts, 1850, ch. 63

Nothing" lodge was established in Ashfield as the concrete expression of a movement which carried the town in the election of 1854 by a small majority.¹

During the Civil War, in which Ashfield supported the northern side with great enthusiasm, the town spent over twenty-one thousand dollars for bounties and other war expenses. One hundred and twenty-four men enlisted, of whom twelve died from wounds, sickness, or during imprisonment in rebel jails.²

Some of the early history of the Baptist and Congregational churches in Ashfield has already been discussed in treating of the historic controversy between the two churches and the activities of the proprietors. Rifts and dissensions continued to dog the churches of Ashfield for many years thereafter.

The "First Baptist Church of Christ", which met as early as 1753 and which was organized in 1761 by Chileab Smith with a membership consisting mainly of his own family, was one of the earliest Baptist groups in western Massachusetts.³ The early church building, mentioned in some of the Baptist petitions opposing forced taxation, was located on a hill nearly opposite Baptist Corner, and its site is now marked by a stone tablet. Reverend Ebenezer Smith, Chileab's son, was the first pastor, his tenure extending from 1761 to 1798.⁴ The latter part of his service was marked by a controversy concerning whether or not the clergymen should be paid a regular fixed salary; Ebenezer and Chileab Smith led the opposing factions, and in 1789 the latter established a dissident group in Buckland. In 1796 the two groups were reunited⁵ and incorporated in 1800 as "The United Baptist Church and Society in Ashfield and Buckland."⁶ Among the members of this congregation were Mary Lyon's family, on both sides. The Buckland Baptists worshipped at Baptist Corner in Ashfield until 1828, when they departed to form their own church.⁷ In 1831 the Ashfield church was moved one hundred feet east of its former location,⁸ but in 1849 the society, weakened by desertions to the Freewill Baptists, Millerites, and Second Adventists, went out of existence.⁹ Meanwhile, in 1814, a "Second Baptist Church" had been organized in South Ashfield, with Rev. Josiah Loomis as pastor.¹⁰ A church building was erected the same year; and the society existed until 1841 when it disbanded.¹¹ For almost twenty years thereafter,

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1. Fowes, op. cit., p. 220
 2. Ibid., pp. 289-291
 3. Ibid., pp. 33, 149
 4. Ibid., p. 32
 5. Ibid., p. 150
 6. Laws, 1800, ch. 62, pp. 447-449
 7. Fowes, op. cit., p. 154
 8. Ibid., p. 33
 9. Ibid., p. 154
 10. Ibid., p. 39
 11. Ibid., p. 154

Ashfield, once a center of the Baptist faith, was without a Baptist church. This situation was remedied in 1867 when the "Ashfield Plain Baptist Church" was established with the assistance of a group of Buckland Baptists. The latter donated their church in Buckland to the Ashfield people, and it was dismantled and removed the same year. The building was dedicated in 1869.¹ It was rebuilt in 1884 and in 1900,² but about 1910 the organization was dissolved, and in 1914 the building was razed.

The founding of the Congregational Church by the proprietors and some of the settlers in 1763, and the erection of a church has already been related. A new building was erected in 1812 at great expense.³ The congregation was split in 1820 and again in 1855. The latter controversy concerned the alleged looseness and irregularity with which the aged church treasurer kept his books.⁴ One group left the church, formed a "New Congregational Church", and in 1856 erected a church building on the Plain. Their first and only settled clergyman was the Rev. E. C. Ewing. In the period from 1867 to 1869 the two churches were reunited as the "First Congregational Church" in Ashfield, using the building of the dissident group. This is a one-story Colonial structure, rebuilt in 1906; it has two ells in the rear, a belfry and a bell. The building of the original Congregational church, constructed in 1812, has been used as the town hall since 1868. With its pretentious tower and steeple, it represents a fine example of New England architecture.⁵

Ashfield is one of the few towns in its locality which is the site of a Protestant Episcopal church. The opportunity for its formation arose when a certain group of Congregationalists vehemently opposed the installation of a Rev. Mr. Woodbridge as pastor. The controversy became so heated that this group resolved to form a new church.⁶ In order to avoid paying taxes to the Congregational Church it was necessary at the time, of course, to be affiliated with some other society. The selection of the Protestant Episcopal faith was caused by the efforts of a local man, Jesse Edson, a fervent Episcopalian, and the missionary work of the Rev. Dr. Strong, pastor of St. James Church in Greenfield.⁷ After the organization of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church in 1820, services were held in private homes, at the South Ashfield Meetinghouse, in the Steady Lane Schoolhouse, and in the town hall.⁸ The Reverend Lot Jones, whose tenure was from 1823 to 1829, was the first settled minister.⁹

1. Howes, op. cit., p. 155

2. Ibid., p. 156

3. Ibid., p. 39

4. Ibid., p. 165

5. Ibid., p. 260

6. Ibid., pp. 39, 166

7. Ibid., p. 167

8. Idem

9. Ibid., p. 168

In the last year of his service, a one-story church building, with a bell-fry and bell, was erected.¹ It is still in use.

The first Universalist Society of Ashfield was organized on September 23, 1840, with a membership of over sixty. Business meetings were held at the homes of members, and services at the Baptist meetinghouse in South Ashfield, until 1844, when the latter building was purchased. In 1846, Rev. Earl Guilford became the first settled minister.² The meetinghouse was repaired in 1867, but the following year the society voted to adjourn for one year. Services were not held thereafter and the society never met again. The meetinghouse later became the South Ashfield Village Hall.³ Another Universalist group held irregular services in South Ashfield from 1902 to 1909, conducted by Rev. W. B. Potter; but it, too, finally went out of existence.⁴

From about 1828 to 1833, Methodists held services in the southeast part of town, led by circuit preachers,⁵ but this denomination never became securely planted in Ashfield.

Nothing illustrates better the intellectual climate which has existed for many years in Ashfield than the history of Sanderson Academy. It was founded by the Rev. Alvan Sanderson, then a Congregational minister, in 1816, for the purpose of giving higher education to boys and girls in the vicinity. Mr. Sanderson died shortly after, leaving a fund for the benefit of the school. In 1817 the academy was fortunate in having Elihu Burritt as principal and Mary Lyon as one of the students.⁶ In 1821, Sanderson Academy was incorporated,⁷ and in the following year Mary Lyon became one of the teachers. She was connected with the school until 1828 as teacher, assistant principal and principal.⁸ In 1823 she wrote: "This is the school where I was principally educated, and to which I felt in no small degree indebted."⁹ One of her advertisements in the Hampshire Gazette, of October 24, 1827, read: "The winter term of fourteen weeks ... will be devoted exclusively to the instruction of FEMALES, under the care of Miss Mary Lyon. The course of instruction will be essentially the same as was pursued the last winter, with the addition of Chirography. The price of board, including fuel and lights, from \$1.17 to \$1.25. Tuition for the whole term of fourteen weeks, \$3.50, to be paid at entrance."¹⁰

1. Howes, op. cit., p. 168

2. Ibid., p. 171; Records of First Universalist Society of Ashfield, 1840-68, 1 vol., ms., in office of town clerk, Town Hall, Ashfield

3. Howes, op. cit., p. 172

4. Universalist Register, Boston, Universalist Publishing House, 1902, 1907, 1909

5. Howes, op. cit., p. 39

6. Ibid., pp. 191-192

7. Ibid., p. 40

8. Ibid., p. 192

9. Idem

10. Ibid., p. 193

In other words, it was possible for a girl to secure higher education for about a dollar and a half a week.

Interest in the school began to decline about 1832, but regular classes did not cease until 1866.¹ During this period not less than twenty-nine of its scholars later became ministers; of its other graduates, perhaps the most notable was G. Stanley Hall, eminent psychologist and founder of Clark University.² In his autobiography Dr. Hall has described with charm and gusto his boyhood days in Ashfield.³

In 1864, Charles. Eliot Norton, the distinguished Harvard professor of art, was struck by the natural beauty of the town as he was riding through, and spent his first summer there. A friend of Carlyle, Ruskin and Browning, who insisted on "ethos" in art, his influence on the thought of his day was considerable. One of Norton's friends, George William Curtis, editor of Harper's, established a summer residence there the following year. Other summer visitors followed. It was a step which had incalculable consequences for Ashfield, and particularly for the academy. In 1877 Norton and Curtis became interested in reviving the school, and contributed both money and talent toward that end.⁴ In 1879 the school was reopened, and in the same year there was held the first of a series of banquets to raise money for it.⁵ These banquets were given annually in the town through 1903, and attracted national attention, not only because of the caliber of the speakers, but also because of the vigor and liberalism of the speeches. Such men as William Dean Howells, G. Stanley Hall, James Russell Lowell, George W. Cable, Booker T. Washington, Josiah Royce and Richard Henry Dana found in these dinners a platform for advocating, among other things, the reform of the tariff and the civil service and the promotion of negro education, as well as for attacks on imperialism.⁶

In 1885 Mr. Field, another summer resident, gave the academy a playing field,⁷ and in 1887 his widow, Mrs. Rachel Field, gave \$9000 to the academy for a new building, which was erected upon this lot and opened in 1889.⁸ The corporate powers of the trustees were revised in 1889.⁹ As a result of a subsequent gift from Mrs. Field, the academy was made free to all children in the town.¹⁰ Another substantial donor to the

1. Howes, op. cit., p. 191

2. Ibid., pp. 195-196

3. G. Stanley Hall, Life and Confessions of a Psychologist, New York, 1923, pp. 62-150, 170-177. Another description of Ashfield by Dr. Hall is contained in Howes, op. cit., pp. 349-364

4. Howes, op. cit., p. 191

5. Ibid., p. 192

6. "Charles Eliot Norton", in Dictionary of American Biography, Dumas Malone, ed., XIII, pp. 569-571; Howes, op. cit., pp. 197-198

7. Howes, op. cit., p. 199

8. Ibid., p. 200

9. Acts, 1889, ch. 252

10. Howes, op. cit., p. 201

school has been Alvan Sanderson, nephew of the founder, whose donation, given in 1903, is managed by the "Trustees of the Sanderson Academy School Fund."¹ In 1908, the academy building was renovated and enlarged.² The enrollment in 1936 was sixty-five pupils.³

Most of the cemeteries in Ashfield, of which there have been at least six, date from an early period. Private or family burial grounds are not included in this number. In 1769 it was: "Voted to purchase a piece of land by the meetinghouse for a Burying Place", and in 1770, one and one-half acres were bought. This now forms part of the Plain Burial Ground, which was enlarged and improved in 1860 and 1893.⁴

In 1772 it was voted to purchase a lot - now known as the Baptist Corner Yard - from Chileab Smith.⁵ In this yard is buried Aaron Lyon, father of Mary Lyon. On his headstone is engraved this verse:

"A loving husband, kind and true,
A tender father was, also;
A faithful son, a brother dear.
A peaceful neighbor was while here.
Though now his body here doth rest,
We trust his soul's among the blest."⁶

The first burial in the Northwest Cemetery took place in 1793. This cemetery is only one-quarter of an acre in size, and contains about fifty graves. It is at present isolated and an old road which formerly led to it has fallen into disuse.⁷

The Spruce Corner Burying Ground was laid out about 1792;⁸ the Centre Cemetery on the "Flat" was laid out in 1813 and enlarged in 1856,⁹ and the Briar Hill Cemetery in 1820.¹⁰ By 1860 all of these cemeteries had fallen into varying degrees of neglect, only partially remedied by the formation that year of the South Ashfield Cemetery Association.¹¹ This organization was superseded by the Ashfield Burial Ground Association, formed in 1887 and incorporated in 1889.¹² The act of incorporation entrusted only the

1. Howes, op. cit., p. 201

2. Ibid., p. 202

3. Annual Reports, 1936, p. 44

4. Howes, op. cit., pp. 239, 241

5. Ibid., p. 239

6. Ibid., p. 241

7. Ibid., p. 242

8. Ibid., p. 243

9. Idem

10. Ibid., p. 244

11. Ibid., p. 245

12. Idem

Plain and Centre cemeteries to its care,¹ but it has gradually come to manage all the cemeteries in the town.²

The "Second Social Library" - the history of the first is shrouded in mystery and rumor - was founded in 1815.³ Since the books never amounted to more than five hundred, the library was kept in the homes of subscribers, and for fourteen years in L. C. Sanderson's shoe shop.⁴ The collection was carefully chosen, however, and many an Ashfield child laid the basis for his education in Sanderson's shop. Interest in the library declined with the passage of the years, and when it appeared that a new private library would be formed, the Social Library was dissolved in 1886, and the books distributed among the members. Most of these volumes were contributed to the "Ashfield Library Association", founded the same year, largely owing to the interest of Professor Norton.⁵ In 1887 Mrs. Rachel Field, furnished a room in the new academy building for the use of the library.⁶ In 1893, and at various times thereafter, the town voted a sum of money to the association to enable the townspeople to use the library without further charge.⁷ The association flourished to the extent of establishing branch libraries in 1903 at Baptist Corner and in South Ashfield.⁸ No free public library existed in Ashfield, however, until 1913, when Milo M. Belding of New York City donated the necessary funds for a new building.⁹ Trustees were elected the same year.¹⁰

The Ashfield Water Company was formed in 1893, with many local persons as stockholders, and Charles Eliot Norton as prime mover. The water works, finished in 1894, were constructed at a cost of \$15,000.¹¹ In 1909, the "old mill pond" was cleaned, and a cement dam built, to make an excellent reservoir.¹² On February 27, 1902, an act was passed by the general court, authorizing the town of Ashfield to establish a municipal water supply. It was the usual all-inclusive act, providing for the election of water commissioners, the authorization of a water loan and a sinking fund, the payment of land damages, etc.¹³ The town failed to ratify it, however, and it was superseded the following year by a new charter granted to the Ashfield Water Company.¹⁴ The town was, however,

1. Acts, 1889, ch. 252

2. Howes, op. cit., p. 245

3. Ibid., p. 203

4. Ibid., p. 204

5. Ibid., p. 206

6. Ibid., p. 209

7. TOWN RECORDS, IV, p. 408

8. Howes, op. cit., p. 211

9. Hampshire Gazette, August 7, 1913, file in Forbes Library,

Northampton

10. TOWN RECORDS, V, pp. 140, 466

11. Howes, op. cit., p. 134

12. Ibid., p. 135

13. Acts, 1902, ch. 129

14. Ibid., 1903, ch. 217

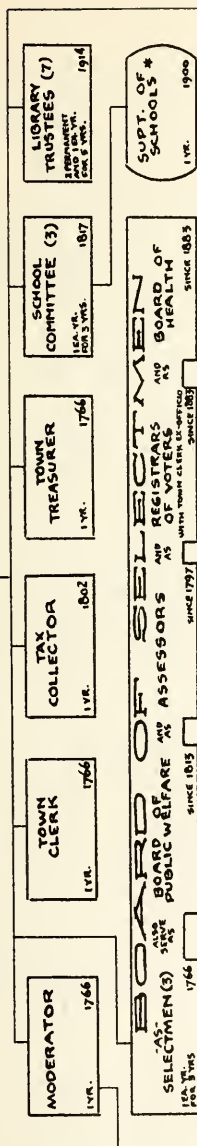
granted the right to purchase the corporation at any time upon the payment of a reasonable sum.¹

Ashfield is in the south-western part of Franklin County. It is bounded on the north by Buckland and Hawley, on the west by Hawley and Plainfield, on the south by Goshen and Cummington, and on the east by Conway. It has no railroad connections, but can be reached either from the Mohawk Trail, Route 2, or the Berkshire Trail, Route 9. Route 116 from Adams to South Deerfield and thence to Springfield passes through the town.

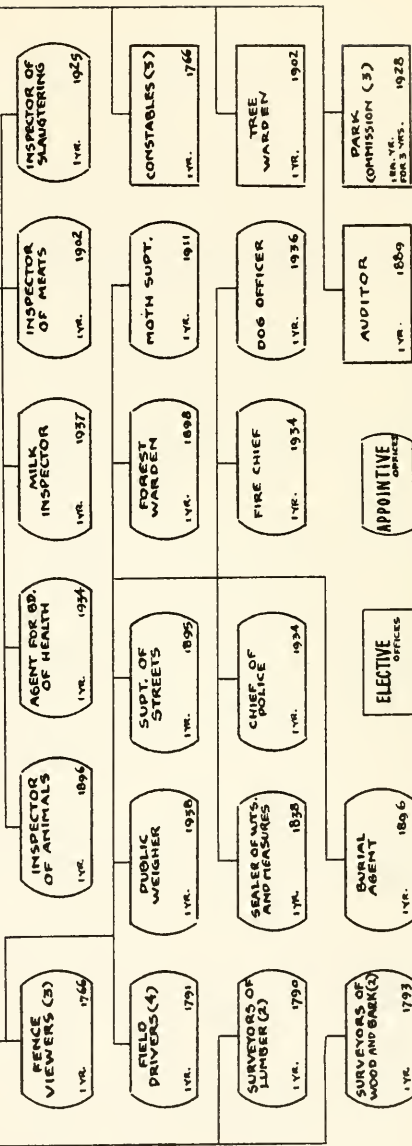
1. Acts, 1903, ch. 217, sec. 7

ELECTORATE

RECORD - KEEPING OFFICES



NON - RECORD - KEEPING OFFICES



* APPOINTED BY SCHOOL COMMITTEES OF ASHFIELD, CUMMINGTOWN, GOSHEN AND PLAINFIELD WHICH CONSTITUTE SCHOOL UNION NO. 33.

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND RECORDS SYSTEM

Governmental Organization¹

As might be imagined from the age of the town, Ashfield has had a great many offices which have long since become obsolete. These include: wardens and tythingmen, a sealer of leather, a clerk of the market, deer and hog reeves, poundkeeper, surveyors of shingles, a packer of beef and pork, a collector of the ministerial tax and an inspector of buildings.

On the other hand, there are a great many early offices which have survived to the present time. Some of these are no longer of great importance: fence viewers, field drivers, constables, surveyors of wood and bark, and surveyors of lumber. As a matter of fact, the latter two are now appointed by the moderator largely as a matter of form, except when a windfall such as that which resulted from the hurricane of 1938, gives them temporary importance.

But certain early offices have become more important with the passing of the years. Notable among these is, of course, the board of selectmen. The selectmen have always handled relief and health matters, have been the assessors of taxes since 1797, and since 1877, have also been the registrars of voters. In addition they appoint each year a great number of officials. Acting, presumably, as the board of health, they have appointed an inspector of meats, and an inspector of animals, since 1909; an agent of the board since 1934; and a milk inspector since 1937. Since 1848 they have, as selectmen, appointed the sealer of weights and measures, and, since 1896, a burial agent. Other appointees include the chief of police, the fire chief, the forest warden, the moth superintendent, the dog officer, the public weigher, and the superintendent of streets.

The elective offices of moderator, town clerk, and town treasurer also date from the first town meeting held in 1766. In general, their functions have remained unchanged.

The office of school committee, established in 1817, has undergone notable changes.² The office of tax collector, once let out to the lowest bidder, is now elective. The duties of the auditor have remained largely unchanged, although the office began in 1889 with two persons

1. For an account of the organization and functioning of town government generally, see Work Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey, Town and City Government in Massachusetts, soon to be published by this project. Sketches of the individual offices mentioned in this section will be found on the following pages.

2. See p. 52

elected annually instead of one. The new offices of tree warden, established in 1902, trustees of the Belding Memorial Library, first elected in 1914 with the establishment of the library, and the park commissioners, first appointed by the moderator and elected since 1930 by the town meeting, have remained the same in all fundamental aspects.

Records System¹

By both law and custom in Massachusetts towns, the clerk is the center of the record-keeping system. The selectmen of Ashfield, however, in performing the duties of the registrars of voters, the assessors, the board of public welfare and the board of health fulfill, perforce, a record-keeping function almost as important as that of the clerk.

The early records of Ashfield are exceptionally complete. There exists not only a five-hundred page volume of proprietors' records covering the period from 1735 to 1808,² but there are other minor records of the proprietors, including a volume with no actual title, called in this inventory (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), 1736-1775,³ and four bundles of proprietors' papers for the period 1743-1799.⁴ The last named should be cleaned, pressed between cellulose acetate sheets and filed in fire-resistant containers. The town records in six volumes, contain the actions of town meetings from 1776 to the present.⁵ Two volumes in this series should be rebound, however. These are all in the possession of the town clerk, as well as records of personal property mortgages in six volumes, dating from 1827,⁶ and vital statistics since 1765, with a comprehensive index beginning in 1854.⁷

The volume of minutes of selectmen's meetings⁸ should be rebound. The absence of earlier minutes is partly compensated for by the existence of a bundle - which should be bound into a volume - of the selectmen's annual reports for the period 1836-1868.⁹ Selectmen's orders date from 1884, in thirteen volumes.¹⁰ Valuation lists kept by the assessors begin in 1790, and include ten bundles and 127 volumes.¹¹ Lists of voters date

1. For an account of the record-keeping system in Massachusetts towns see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. See entry 8

3. See entry 29

4. See entry 19

5. See entry 12

6. See entry 18

7. See entries 14-17, incl.

8. See entry 1

9. See entry 4

10. See entry 5

11. See entry 38

from 1816, and, though not without gaps, are more complete than might be expected.¹ A nine-volume series of treasurer's records dates from 1746, and includes not only the records of the town treasurer but also those of the proprietors' treasurer.² Minutes of the school committee meetings date from 1880.³ Perhaps equally important are the records of Sanderson Academy, both financial and general.⁴ They begin in 1817 and are quite comprehensive. All the above indicate the wealth of early material to be found in Ashfield.

In a town as old as Ashfield the completeness and general good condition of the records is commendable. With the exception of missing records in the register of voters,⁵ there are no serious gaps. The records are generally well titled and marked. Indexes are lacking for some of the more important records series, however, and are herewith recommended, especially for the proprietors' and town records.⁶ In recent years, there has been a tendency to merge welfare records with those of the treasurer. It is a tendency that should be curbed. Recommended without qualification is revision of the annual reports so as to include a list of elected and appointed town officers, and an index or table of contents.

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1. See entry 35
 2. See entry 45
 3. See entry 48
 4. See entries 58-63
 5. See entry 35
 6. Entries 8, 29 and 12, respectively

HOUSING, CARE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE RECORDS

Considering the age and value of the Ashfield records, it cannot be said that they are ideally housed. No ordinary care would be adequate. It is suggested that the town authorities consider the possibility of removing all old records, without exception, to the public library and placing them in a special vault with adequate fire protection.

At present, most of the town records are housed in the Town Hall, an old wooden-frame building. They are contained in three rooms and a vault on the first floor. The steel safe in Room No. 2 is so crowded that the bindings of the volumes are placed under great strain when they are removed or replaced. Individual papers also are apt to be crumpled.

The vault contains sufficient space for the addition of a few steel shelves, which would make it unnecessary to keep records in boxes on the floor. The only illumination, furnished by the open door, is very poor. Since the building is wired and there are electric lights in the other rooms, there seems to be little reason why the vault could not be equipped with an electric bulb, or a portable drop light introduced when necessary.

Room No. 1 contains school records and school supplies, without any semblance of order. Records are in a jumbled condition, and have no fire protection. Outside of these school records, all records are fairly well arranged. Records kept in the homes of several town officials are generally in desks, but are not great in number.

Important Sanderson Academy records as well as the library records are contained in the Belding Memorial Library. Conditions here are most satisfactory.

The town officials having records in their homes were the following at the time of the inventory:-

Name	Address	Office Held	Has Records of
A. G. Hawes	Steady Lane	Town Clerk	Town Clerk
Mrs. Hattie Guilford	Main Street	Secretary of School Committee	School Committee
E. K. Currie	Main Street	Supt. of Schools	School Dept.
Archie Jenkins	Watson Road	Inspector of Meats	Inspector of Meats

Housing, Care and Accessibility of the Records

First entry p. 39

Conditions in the Town Hall and the Belding Memorial Library are summarized in the following table:-

ASHFIELD TOWN HALL, MAIN STREET, ASHFIELD

Depository	Room No. 1	Room No. 2	Room No. 3	Town Vault
Location	1st Floor	1st Floor	1st Floor	1st Floor
Dimensions ¹	20x7x10	10x10x9	20x12x12	10x7x7
Cubic Feet	1,400	900	2,800	490
Fireproof	N.F.R.	N.F.R.	N.F.R.	F.R.
Shelving	Wood	Wood	Wood	Steel
Containers	None	Steel	Steel & Wood	Steel
Lighting	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Accessibility	Good	Good	Good	Good
Arrangement	Good	Good	Fair	Good
Physical Condition	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good
Room for Expansion	Ample	Crowded	Ample	Limited
Departments Having Records There	School	Selectmen Town Clerk Tax Collector Public Welfare Assessors Sealer of W.&H. Board of Health	Town Clerk Selectmen	Selectmen Clerk Treasurer Tax Collector School Assessors Bd. of Health Library Public Welfare

BELDING MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Depository	Office
location	1st Floor
Dimensions ¹	18x11x11
Cubic Feet	2,178
Fireproof	Part
Shelving	Wood
Containers	None
Lighting	Good
Accessibility	Good
Arrangement	Good
Physical Condition	Good
Room for Expansion	Ample
Departments Having Records There	Library School

1. Dimensions are given in the order of length by width by height and are in feet

ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

Abbreviations and Foreign Terms

alph.	alphabetical(ly)	no..	number
arr.	arranged (arrangement)	off.	office
bdl(s).	bundle(s)	<u>op. cit.</u>	work cited
ch.	chapter	p., pp.	page, pages
chron.	chronological(ly)	ptd.	printed
cl.	clerk('s)	rm.	room
discont.	discontinued	sec(s).	section(s)
fl.	floor	secy.	secretary(s)
hdw.	handwritten	st.	street
<u>ibid.</u>	in the same place	supt.	superintendent(s)
<u>idem.</u>	the same reference	T.H.	Town Hall
<u>incl.</u>	inclusive	va.	vault
ms.	manuscript	vol(s).	volume(s)

Symbols

--	continues to date	:	equivalent to
"	inches	x	by
'	feet	...	denotes omission in quoted matter

Explanatory Notes

Inventory Arrangement

The city and town offices are arranged in the order of their importance from a functional viewpoint, with related offices grouped together. Records within an office are classified by subject. Within each subject classification entries are listed in the order of their importance and, for records considered of equal importance, a chronological sequence is used.

Titles

Exact titles of records are shown in upper case without parentheses. The contents of untitled records are indicated by assigning titles to them. Titles of this kind are shown in upper case enclosed by parentheses. When an exact title does not adequately describe the true nature of the record, such information is inserted in the title line but in the lower case and enclosed within parentheses. The current or most recent title of a record is used as the entry title, and any variation of title within the record series is noted.

Labeling

The numbering, lettering or other markings on a record are shown in parentheses following the quantity.

Cross References

Cross references are made in each entry to records of the same series found in other entries. References to similar records are embodied in a separate line immediately following the entry. References below subject headings are made to other related record series suggested by the headings or subheadings. Where no comment is made regarding prior or subsequent records, it is to be presumed that none were found.

Indexing

If there is no index to a record, the fact is stated in the entry. If no mention is made of the absence of an index, it is either contained in the entry or in a separate entry, immediately following it, if possible.

Dimensions

Except where otherwise indicated, dimensions of volumes, file boxes, or maps are shown in inches; dimensions of volumes in the order of length along binding edge, width, and thickness; dimensions of file cases, boxes and drawers in the order of height, width and depth.

Location

The location noted is that of the date of the final field check of the inventory, approximately four months prior to publication. Many records, especially current ones, are in constant use by officials, and subject to frequent transfer from office to vault or from vault to office. Shifts from one vault to another also occur, but less frequently. The Historical Records Survey cannot guarantee that the record will be found in the location noted, but merely that the record was found there at the date of the inventory field check.

Condition of Records

If no comment is made regarding the condition of records, it may be assumed to be satisfactory.

PART B. TOWN OFFICERS AND THEIR RECORDS

I. SELECTMEN¹

Three selectmen were elected annually from 1766 through 1907.² Since 1908 they have been elected for three-year terms, one annually.³

The concentration of governmental authority in the hands of the selectmen is not a new phenomenon in Ashfield. The selectmen have always been entrusted with "the care of the poor", either informally or, since 1813, as overseers of the poor; they are now elected as members of the board of public welfare.⁴ Since 1797, and in some years before that date, they have performed the duties of assessors although they are not formally elected as the board of assessors.⁵ In addition they have acted, at least since 1883, as the board of health, but have not been formally mentioned as such until 1916 and are not even today formally elected to that office.⁶ Finally, they have been organized formally as registrars of voters, with the town clerk as a fourth member ex-officio, since 1883.⁷

Although they have appointed the sealer of weights and measures fairly regularly since 1848,⁸ their appointive powers are, in general, of much more recent date. They have appointed special police at various times since 1893, and the chief of police annually since 1934.⁹ They have appointed highway surveyors or highway road agents beginning in 1869 and the superintendent of streets since 1895,¹⁰ the burial agent since 1896,¹¹ and an inspector of buildings from 1896 through 1936.¹² In

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 145, 255; III, pp. not numbered; V, p. 16

3. TOWN RECORDS, V, pp. 28, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53

4. Ibid., I, pp. 205-207, 255; IV, pp. 27, 231, 410; V, pp. 28, 386; VI, p. 554

5. Ibid., III, pp. not numbered; IV, pp. 376, 410; V, pp. 28, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53

6. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), 1 vol., ms., pp. 72, 86, 92, 320. See entry 1

7. See entry 34

8. TOWN RECORDS, III, pp. not numbered; IV, pp. 13, 47, 77, 221; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 254, 356, 50, 92

9. TOWN RECORDS, IV, pp. 405, 421; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 286, 292, 319, 67, 72, 76, 92

10. TOWN RECORDS, IV, p. 230; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 222, 230, 239, 241, 254, 288, 319, 342, 62, 92

11. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 243, 355, 356, 50, 92

12. Ibid., pp. 243, 356, 50, 83

Selectmen

(1)

1896 they appointed the inspector of animals and provisions, and now appoint the two officers who have succeeded him, the inspector of meats and the inspector of animals.¹ From 1898 through 1908 they appointed forest wards, and since 1909 have appointed the forest warden.² They appointed a weigher of coal annually from 1910 through 1928, and in the past two years (1938-1939) have appointed the public weigher.³ The office of moth superintendent, to which the first appointment was made in 1911, has continued, although not mentioned in the records in some years, to the present time.⁴ The selectmen appointed varying numbers of fire engineers from 1916 through 1933, and since 1934 have appointed the fire chief.⁵ Since 1921 the selectmen have appointed the fence viewers and field drivers.⁶ They appointed an inspector of slaughtering in 1925, 1935 and 1938 but no appointment was made in 1939.⁷ Other recent appointees, with the date of inception of the office, are: agent for the board of health (1934); dog officer (1936); and milk inspector (1937).⁸

Except where otherwise noted, all records are in the town vault, first floor, Town Hall. In addition to the following records, see entry 47 for certification of accounts 1892--.

Minutes and Reports

1. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), 1893--. 1 vol.
Date, place of meeting; names of officers appointed by selectmen, nature of other business transacted, signatures of selectmen (early years only). Also contains:
 - i. Inventory of town farm property, 1884-95: Date of inventory; value, itemization of stock; amount of gain on property. For list of property 1895-98, see entry 3-v.
 - ii. List of licenses granted: Type of license, name of licensee; date of issue, expiration.
 - iii. (Minutes of meetings of Registrars of Voters), entry 34.
 - iv. (Minutes of Meetings of Assessors), entry 36.
 - v. (Minutes of Meetings of Board of Public Welfare), entry 69.
 - vi. (Minutes of Meetings of Board of Health), entry 73.
 - vii. Record of permits for pole locations: Name of company; location, date of erection of poles and lines.
- Arr. chron. No index. Edw. 358 pp. 12 x 8 x 1. Safe, rm. 2, first fl. T.F.

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1. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 241, 249, 249, 266, 268, 278, 288, 92
 2. Ibid., pp. 254, 286, 298, 356, 50, 92
 3. Ibid., pp. 292, 350, 89, 92
 4. Ibid., 303, 331, 50, 92
 5. Ibid., 319, 342, 72, 92
 6. Ibid., 331, 350, 50, 92
 7. Ibid., 342, 76, 89
 8. Ibid., 72, 83, 86, 89, 92

2. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OFFICERS, 1869--. 3 vols., 1 folder, 10 pamphlets (3 vols., 1869-1929, 1-3; 1 folder, 1892, 10 pamphlets, 1930--, unlabeled). Missing: 1865-68, 1870-71, 1874. Title varies: Annual Town Reports, 1869-1891, 1893-1929, 3 vols.

Contains reports of town officers and committees as described in entries 3, 13, 37, 44, 47, 49-54, 59-61, 65, 70, 74, 78. Also contains:

- i. Balance sheet of town accounts, 1927, 1932, 1935, 1937:
 - a. Assets: Amount of estimated receipts, overdrawn and receivable accounts, balance.
 - b. Liabilities: Amount of payments for taxes, value of reserve and special funds, amount of surplus.
 - c. Private and town funds, amount of. For report of trustees of Miller fund, see iv f.
 - ii. Books added to library during year, list of, 1908-9, 1911, 1914, 1923--: Name of author, title of book. For list of books in library 1910, 1912-13, 1915-22, see entry 65-i.
 - iii. Jury list, 1905--: Names of persons selected for jury service. For jury list 1900-1904, see entry 13-ii.
 - iv. Special reports, 1912, 1916-1924, 1928-31, 1936:
 - a. Committee on repairs to Town Hall, 1875.
 - b. Consultant nurse, 1936: Account of services rendered school nurse, account of activities concerning Well Child conference, number of children tested with audiometer.
 - c. District nurse, 1928-31: Number of bedside and investigating calls made, lectures and meetings attended; totals; amount of money collected during year.
 - d. State auditor, 1922: Amount of total receipts, payments, outstanding checks; amount of taxes collected, outstanding, abated; amount of payments to treasurer, balance; name, value of special funds; amount of income, payments from funds; par value of securities; amount of accounts receivable, overdrawn, deficit, temporary loans.
 - e. Supervisor of elementary education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts concerning consolidation of schools, 1923.
 - f. Trustees of Miller fund, 1912, 1916-21, 1924: Amount of deposits, balance; amount, type of loans. For orders drawn on fund 1891-1919, see entry 32-ii; for receipts and expenditures 1880-1925, see entry 72.
 - v. Town officers, list of, 1875: Names of officials, length of term of office.
 - vi. Valuations list, 1888, 1907, 1914, 1920, 1923, 1925, 1931, 1936: Name of property owner, valuation of real and personal property. 1888, 1907 includes description of property; 1888 includes list of property exempted from taxation.
- No arr. No index. Ptd. Vols., 300 pp. 9 x 5 x 1½; folder, 9 x 5 x ¼; pamphlets, 50 pp. 9 x 5 x ¼. State Library, State House, Boston. (Also 42 vols., 1869--; town va., T.H.)

3. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SELECTMEN), 1869, 1872-73, 1875--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Contains:

- i. Baptist Corner Bridge, names of donors to construction of, 1900.
- ii. Financial statement:
 - a. Appropriations, amount of, 1869, 1872-73, 1877--; amount for ensuing year, 1884-89, 1903--.
 - b. Assets and liabilities, 1887-1905, 1908: Amount, source of assets; amount, cause of liabilities.
 - c. Debts, 1869, 1873, 1936: Names of bondholder, value of bond, 1869, 1873 includes date of draft, maturity of bond.
 - d. Expenditures, 1869, 1872, 1878, 1881--: Name of payee; amount, purpose of payment, 1883-- includes summary of selectmen's orders, classification of expenditures.
 - e. Receipts: Name of payer; amount, source of income; balance. For treasurer's report of town finances 1875-76, 1906--, see entry 44.
- iii. Funds, record of, 1881--: Amount of payment from Miller fund, names of payees, 1882-- includes some data on Whiting Street fund.
- iv. Narrative account of departmental activities, 1876, 1882-85: Recommendations concerning finances, buildings, appointment of teachers.
- v. Property at town farm, list of, 1895-98: Quantity, value of each item. For inventory of property 1884-95, see entry 1-i.
- vi. School-district statistics, 1872-73: Total school enrollment; average, percentage of pupil attendance; length of school year, amount of funds allotted each school district; cost of board for teachers, maintenance of schools per scholar.
- vii. Valuation lists, 1881-86, 1889--: Amount of valuation of real, personal property; number of polls; amount of poll tax, tax rate, total assessments. Includes: 1885-86, 1889--, number of horses, cows, sheep; 1885, 1896-97, number of dwellings; 1885, names of taxpayers assessed for \$25 and up, amount of each payment, valuation of all town property; 1889--, number of swine assessed; 1889, number of acres of land; 1893, 1895, 1904--, number of fowl; 1929--, number, amount of valuation of assessed automobiles; amount of motor vehicle tax, abatements.

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF SELECTMEN (on Treasurer's Accounts), 1836-68.
1 bdl.

Verification of treasurer's expenditures for schools, roads, bridges, tax collections, public welfare, ringing church bell, recording of vital statistics, services of constable; balance in treasury, date of report, signatures of selectmen. Arr. by date of report. No index. Edw.
9 x 3 x 2¹.

5. (Record of) TOWN ORDERS, 1884--. 13 vols.
Approval of warrants for payment of departmental expenses: Name of payee, department charged; amount, purpose of payment; date of warrant. Arr. by date of warrant. No index. Edw. 75 pp. 10 x 10 x 1. 10 vols., 1884-1923, town va.; 3 vols., 1924--, safe, rm. 2; first fl., T.E.
For treasurer's record of orders 1906--, see entry 44-iii.

6. LIST OF PERSONS RECEIVING STATE AID, 1866-1904. 1 vol.
Name, address, age, service record of recipient; number of dependents; amount, date of aid. Arr. alph. by name of recipient. No index. Edw. 237 pp. 13 x 8 x 1.

7. PETITION AND ORDER OF NOTICE TO VIEW (Roads), 1771--. 10 bdl.
Petitions and selectmen's orders to view roads for relocation and repair: Name, location, description, bounds of roads; date of petition, order, laying out of road. Arr. by date of petition. No index. Edw. to 1894, hdw. on ptd. form thereafter. 11 x 4 x 3. 6 bdls., 1771-1894, town va.; 1 bdl., 1895-1911, rm. 3; 3 bdls., 1912--, safe, rm. 2; first fl., T.E.

II. TOWN CLERK¹

A town clerk has been elected annually since 1766.² From 1796 through 1813, except for 1806; from 1820 through 1822; and since 1898, the town clerk has been elected town treasurer also.³

Except where otherwise noted, all records are in the town vault, first floor, Town Hall.

Proprietors' Records (See also entry 29-ii,-iii)

8. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS - TOWN OF ASHFIELD, Dec. 5, 1735-1808.
1 vol.
Minutes of proprietors' meetings, March 13, 1738-1808: Date, place of meeting; list of articles to be voted on and decisions thereon, names of committeemen elected to manage affairs; attest, signature of clerk.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 256; VI, pp. 5, 53

3. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 119, 169, 256; II, pp. 124, 136; IV, pp. 437, 489; VI, p. 53

8. PROPRIETORS' RECORDS - TOWN OF ASHFIELD, (Cont'd).

Also contains:

- i. Act (copy) of the Province of Massachusetts Bay relative to grant of land to original settlers of Ashfield, Dec. 5, 1735.
- ii. Division of lots, record of: Number, description of lot; number, date of drawing of lot; names of proprietors, descendants or representatives who drew lots.
- iii. Warrants (copies) notifying proprietors of meeting: Place, date, time of meeting; list of articles to be voted on. For petition for meetings 1743-65, see entry 19.
- iv. Committeemen's returns (copies): Statement that committeemen have notified proprietors of meeting; names of committeemen; attestation of clerk.

Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 500 pp. 13 x 9 x 2. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

9. TREASURER'S RECORDS (of Receipts and Expenditures), 1746-64.
2 vols.

Receipts: Name of payer; amount, source, date of income. Expenditures: Name of payee; amount, purpose, date of payment. Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 75 pp. 15 x 6 x 1.

10. (DOCUMENTS OF EBENEZER HUNT), 1690, 1735, 1761. 1 bdl.
(dated).

List of soldiers serving under Captain Ebenezer Hunt, 1690; copy of petition of Ebenezer Hunt and others praying for a grant of land for establishment of a township, Dec. 5, 1735; copy of will of Ebenezer Hunt, October 30, 1761. No arr. No index. Hdw. 8 x 4 x 3.

11. PROPRIETORS' LOTS OF TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1760. 1 map.

Land tenure map showing location, area, bounds of lots granted to original settlers. Frederick G. Hawes. Ashfield, publisher unknown. Blueprint, framed. Scale, 1":200'. 24 x 24. Rm. 3, first fl., T.H.

Minutes and Reports
(See also entry 8)12. RECORDS - TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1776--. 6 vols. (5 vols., 1776-1813, 1835--, unlabeled; 1 vol., 1814-35, marked No. 4.)
Title varies: No title, 1776-1813, 1835-1905, 3 vols.; Town Records, 1814-35, 1 vol.

Minutes of town meetings: Place, date of meetings; list of articles to be voted on and decisions thereon; attestation of town clerk. Also contains copies of:

- i. Lists of licensed dogs, 1862-76: Number, date of license; name of dog owner, description of dog; attestation of town clerk.
- ii. Lists of persons liable to do military duty, 1840-72: Names of persons, attestation of town clerk. 1854-72 includes age, occupation of person. For lists 1885-93, see entry 31.

(12-14)

Town Clerk - Proprietors' Records

12. RECORDS - TOWN OF ASHFIELD, (Cont'd).

- iii. Warrants for town meetings: Date of warrant; date, time, place of meeting; list of articles to be voted on, names of selectmen. Includes constable's return: Date of return, name of constable, attestation of town clerk. For petitions for meetings 1765-99, see entry 19; for copies of warrants 1765-75, see entry 29-iv.

Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 2 vols., 1776-1813, 1854-1905, binding in poor condition. 273 pp. 14 x 6 x 1 to 503 pp. 12 x 9 x 2. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

For copies of minutes of town meetings 1765-75, see entry 29-ii.

13. (ANNUAL REPORT OF TOWN CLERK), 1875-76, 1891--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Contains:

- i. Bylaws, abstract of town, 1900-1902.
- ii. Jury list, 1900-1904: Names of persons chosen for jury service. For jury list 1905--, see entry 2-iii.
- iii. Licenses issued, record of, 1910, 1915-28: Number of sporting, trapping, dog licenses issued. 1921 includes amount of license fee collections.
- iv. Vital statistics:
 - a. Births: Name and date of birth of child, name of father, 1875-76, 1898--; total number of births, 1891-97; name of mother, 1898.
 - b. Marriages: Names of bride and groom, date of marriage, 1875-76, 1898--; total number of marriages, 1891-97; town of residence of parties, 1908--.
 - c. Deaths: Name, age of decedant, 1895-- includes place, date of death.

Vital Statistics

(See also entry 13-iv)

14. BIRTHS - DEATHS - MARRIAGES IN TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1765--. 5 vols. (dated).

Contains record of:

- i. Births: Name, sex, color of child; place, date of birth; names, address, occupations of parents; name of attending physician.
- ii. Deaths: Name, age of deceased person; name of attending physician, place of interment; cause, date of death.
- iii. Marriages: Names, addresses, occupations of contracting parties; names, addresses of parents; names of witnesses and clergyman; date of marriage.

Arr. by subject and chron. thereunder. 1765-1853, no index; for index 1854--, see entry 15. Edw. 300 pp. 14 x 10 x 2. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

15. INDEX TO BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES, 1854--. 5 vols.
Names of parties, volume and page reference. Arr. alph. by name of party. Hdw. 150 pp. 11 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

16. RETURN OF A BIRTH - CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE - RETURN OF THE DEATHS, 1893--. 1 file box, 10 bdl.

Contains:

- i. Birth returns: Name, sex, color, weight of child; place, date of birth; names, address, occupations of parents; name of attending physician.
- ii. Death returns: Name, age of deceased person; names of parents, place of interment; cause, date of death.
- iii. Record of marriage certificates: Names, addresses, occupations, birthplaces of contracting parties; names of parents and clergyman; place, date of marriage.

Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. File box, 8 x 2 x 6; bdl., 10 x 4 x 2. 1 file box, 1893-1914, town va.; 10 bdl., 1915--, safe, residence of Allison G. Howes (town cl.), Steady Lane.

17. (Record of) MARRIAGES, 1858-1905. 1 vol.

Names, addresses, ages, birthplaces, prior marital status of contracting parties; names of parents; name, title of person officiating; occupation of groom, date of marriage. Arr. by date of marriage. No index. Hdw. 200 pp. 18 x 12 x 1. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

Mortgages, Petitions, Leases

18. (Record of Personal Property) MORTGAGES, 1827--. 6 vols.

Name of mortgagor, mortgagee; location, description, valuation of property; amount, date of mortgage. Arr. by date of mortgage. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. 450 pp. 13 x 9 x 2. 2 vols., 1827-82, town va.; 1 vol., 1883-1917, safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.; 3 vols., 1918--, residence of Allison G. Howes (town cl.), Steady Lane.

19. (PETITIONS FOR MEETINGS), 1743-99. 4 bdl. (dated).

Petitions for proprietors' meetings to 1765, town meetings thereafter: Articles to be voted upon, date of meeting, signature of clerk. Includes record of redivision of lands and road lay-outs. Arr. by date of meeting. No index. Hdw. 7 x 3 x $\frac{1}{2}$.

20. A COPY OF A LEASE OF A LOTT OF LAND, 1794. 1 bdl.

Copies of leases to ministerial and school lands: Name of lessor, lessee; location of land, amount of consideration; terms, date of lease; signatures of witnesses, volume and page reference to instruments recorded in county registry of deeds. Arr. by date of lease. No index. Hdw. 7 x 3 x 1.

Licenses

(See also entries 1-ii, 13-iii)

21. (Record of) DOG LICENSE(s), 1901--. 28 vols. Missing: 1902-3, 1905, 1907, 1910, 1913. Prior records destroyed.

Name, address of dog owner; name, age, sex, breed, color of dog; date of issue, expiration of license. Arr. by date of issue. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. 100 pp. 12 x 5 x 1. 20 vols., 1901-28, town va.; 8 vols., 1929--, residence of Allison G. Howes (town cl.), Steady Lane.

For list of licensed dogs 1862-76, see entry 12-i.

22. LICENSE BOOK, 1936--. 2 vols. Prior records destroyed.

Record of licenses granted: Name, address of applicant; location, type of business; date of application; type, date of issue of license. Arr. by date of issue. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. 50 pp. 14 x 6 x $\frac{1}{4}$. Desk, rm. 3, first fl., T.H.

23. LICENSE TO CARRY PISTOL OR REVOLVER, 1926--. 1 vol.

Record of persons licensed to carry arms: Name, address, birthplace, age, sex, color, height, weight of applicant; reason for, date of issue of permit; signature of clerk. Arr. by date of issue. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. 100 pp. 7 x 4 x 1. Rm. 3, first fl., T.H.

Maps

(See also entry 11)

24. TOWN OF ASHFIELD, May 27, 1795; Dec. 21, 1830. 2 maps.

Land tenure maps showing lay-out and ownership of town land: Names of lot owners; names, locations of streets, roads. Author, publisher unknown. Black-and-white. No scale. 24 x 24, 15 x 12.

25. (PUBLIC WORKS MAPS), 1903. 16 maps.

Construction maps showing pipe lines and conduits of Ashfield Water Works, proposed sewer beds, electric light and pole locations. F. E. Davis. Greenfield, publisher unknown. Blueprint. Scale, 1":200'. 20 x 8. Cabinet, rm. 3, first fl., T.H.

26. ASHFIELD WATER WORKS, 1904. 2 maps.

Construction maps showing location of pipe lines, mains, high and low pressure hydrants. A. H. Beers. Whately, publisher unknown. Black-and-white. Scale, 1":40'. 40 x 40.

Miscellaneous

27. OATHS OF OFFICERS, 1817-1928. 2 vols.

Record of town officers' oaths taken upon induction into office: Name of officer, person administering oath; term of office, date of induction, signature of town clerk. Arr. by date of induction. No index. Hdw. 200 pp. 12 x 7 x 2. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

28. CERTIFICATE OF THE OATH OF THE TOWN OFFICERS, 1821-42. 1 bdl. (dated).

Certificates of oaths taken upon induction into office by clerk, assessors, tax collector, treasurer: Name of official, title of office, date of administration, certification of justice of the peace. Arr. by date of oath. No index. Hdw. 8 x 2 x 2.

29. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), 1736-75. 1 vol. Contains copy of:

- i. Act of incorporation of town of Ashfield, June 21, 1765. For description, see entry 91.
- ii. Minutes of proprietors' meetings, 1738-75, minutes of town meetings, 1765-75: Place, date of meeting; nature of business transacted; attestation of clerk.
- iii. Record of land grants to original proprietors, 1736: Name of proprietor, description of property, date of grant.
- iv. Town-meeting warrants, 1765-75: Date of warrant; time, place of meeting; list of articles to be acted on; names of selectmen, attestation of town clerk.
- v. Valuation tables, 1766, 1771: Number of polls, names of persons assessed; number of houses, lands, livestock owned; amount of assessment; names of assessors, attestation of town clerk.

Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 150 pp. 13 x 8 x 1. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

30. (SCRAP ALBUM), 1765, 1780. 1 vol.

Contains:

- i. Copy of warrant, signed by Thomas Williams, issued by the general court to Samuel Belding to call the first town meeting in Ashfield, Dec. 21, 1765.
- ii. Record of perambulations showing town boundary lines, 1765.
- iii. Selectmen's orders on treasurer authorizing payment of bounty to soldiers, Oct. 16, 1780.

Arr. by date of record. No index. Hdw. 50 pp. 14 x 12 x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$.

31. LIST OF ENROLLED MILITIA, 1885-93. 1 bdl.

Names of men liable for military duty, date of listing. Arr. by date of listing. No index. Hdw. 8 x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 2.

For militia roll 1840-72, see entry 12-ii.

32. (WILL OF SALMON MILLER, ORDERS DRAWN ON MILLER FUND, TOWN FARM PURCHASE), 1862, 1891-1919. 1 vol.

Contains:

- i. Copy of will of Salmon Miller leaving money and real estate to the town for the benefit of the poor, May 5, 1862.
 - ii. Orders drawn on Miller fund, 1891-1919, showing date, amount of order. For receipts and expenditures of fund 1880-1925, see entry 72.
 - iii. Record of purchase of property for town farm from Elias and Charles Rogers, showing amount paid.
- Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 189 pp. 10 x 8 x 1.

33. RECORD OF EAR MARKS, 1765-75. 1 bdl.

Identification marks on cattle and swine: Name of owner, description of ear mark, date of registration. Arr. by date of registration. No index. Hdw. 10 x 4 x $\frac{1}{4}$.

III. REGISTRARS OF VOTERS¹

Although lists of voters have been kept by the selectmen since 1816, formal meetings of the selectmen as registrars in Ashfield commence in 1883.² A state act of 1884 while requiring the establishment of a board of registrars of voters permitted, in towns having less than 300 registered voters, the selectmen together with the town clerk, ex-officio, to serve in this capacity.³

34. (MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS), 1883--. In (Minutes of Selectmen's Meetings), entry 1.

Names, addresses of registrars; action on dropping, adding names to voting list; investigation of illegal voters, questionable names; dates of meetings.

35. GENERAL REGISTER OF VOTERS, 1816--. 11 rolls, 4 vols. Missing: 1830-54, 1870-76. Title varies: List of Voters, 1816-69, 11 rolls.

Name, address, age, occupation of voter. 1877-- includes birthplace, signature of voter; date of registration. No index. Hdw. Rolls, 13 x 3; vols., 50 pp. 16 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$. 11 rolls, 1816-69, town vs.; 4 vols., 1877--, safe, rm. 2; first fl., T.H.

1. For the statutory origin, development and functions of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. See entries 35 and 34, respectively

3. Acts, 1884, ch. 298, secs. 14, 49

IV. ASSESSORS¹

Three assessors were elected for one-year terms in 1766, 1767, 1773, 1784-1789 inclusive, and 1796.² In the intervening years and since 1797 it has usually been voted that the selectmen serve as assessors.³ According to present practice, the new selectman elected each year is elected as assessor and member of the board of public welfare also.⁴

Except where otherwise noted, all records are in the Town Hall.

36. (MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF ASSESSORS), 1883--. In (Minutes of Selectmen's Meetings), entry 1.
Recommendations for tax abatements, proposals for tax changes, adjustment of tax assessments; time, place, date of meeting.

37. (ANNUAL REPORT OF ASSESSORS), 1874, 1885. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Valuation and tax lists: Name of taxpayer; description, amount of valuation of real and personal property; total tax payments; amount of poll tax, tax rate; amount of state, county, town assessments; number of polls, dwellings, horses, cows, sheep, acres of land taxed; certification of list by justice of the peace.

38. VALUATION LISTS, 1790--. 10 bds., 127 vols. Missing: 1831-35.
Name, address of taxpayer; location, description, valuation of property; amount, type, date of tax. 10 bds., 1790-1828, arr. by year; 127 vols., 1817--, arr. by year and thereunder alph. by name of taxpayer. No index. Hdw. Bds., writing faded, paper poor. Bds., 14 x 3 x 3; vols., 125 pp. 14 x 13 x 1. 10 bds., 1790-1828, 118 vols., 1817-1928, town va.; 9 vols., 1929--, safe, rm. 2, T.H.

For published valuation lists 1888, 1907, 1914, 1920, 1923, 1925, 1931, 1936, see entry 2-vi, 1881-86, 1889--, see entry 5-vii, 1874 and 1885, see entry 37; for tax commitments 1885--, see entry 42.

39. MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE (Assessments), 1929--. 9 vols. Tax authorized by law 1929.
Name, address of owner; make, year, model, type, valuation of car; amount, period, date of tax. Arr. by date of assessment. No index. Hdw. 15 pp. 18 x 14 x 1. Safe, rm. 2, first fl.
For tax receipts, see entry 43.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 11, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 56, 78, 119

3. TOWN RECORDS, III, pp. not numbered; IV, pp. 376, 410; V, pp. 28, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53

4. Ibid., VI, p. 53

40. COMMITMENT (List of) MOTOR VEHICLE EXCISE, 1929-- , 8 vols. (dated). Tax authorized by law 1929.

Name, address of car owner; type, year, motor number of vehicle; amount, date of tax, interest accrued. Arr. alph. by name of car owner. No index. Hdw. 37 pp. 11 x 9 x $\frac{1}{2}$. 4 vols., 1929-32, town va.; 4 vol., 1933-- , rm. 2; first fl.

41. ABATEMENT RECORD, 1909-- . 1 vol. Prior records destroyed.

Name of taxpayer; amount, date of tax; amount, cause, date of abatement. Arr. by date of abatement. No index. Hdw. 100 pp. 12 x 8 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, first fl.

V. TAX COLLECTOR¹

Prior to 1802, actual collection of taxes in Ashfield as in most Massachusetts towns was entrusted to the constables. The office of collector of taxes was struck off to the lowest bidder from 1802 through 1892.² On a few occasions the tax collector, after the bidding, was also formally elected constable.³ From 1893 through 1905, the tax collector was paid a fixed salary and almost always was elected constable as well.⁴ Since 1906 a tax collector, who holds no other office, has been elected annually at a fixed salary.⁵

In addition to the following records, see entry 47 for certification of collector's accounts 1892--.

42. TAX (Commitment) LIST, 1885-- . 34 vols. Missing: 1889, 1891-92, 1908, 1912, 1915-21, 1924, 1926-27.

List of real and personal property, poll tax payers: Name of taxpayer; amount, rate, type of tax; amount, date of payment. Arr. alph. by name of taxpayer. No index. Hdw. 100 pp. 9 x 7 x 1. Town va., first fl., T.H.

For valuations 1790-- , see entry 38.

43. (Motor Vehicle) EXCISE TAX CASH (Receipt) BOOKS, 1929-- .

8 vols. (dated). Tax authorized by law 1929.

Name, address of vehicle owner; amount, period of tax; interest charges; amount, cause, date of abatement; amount, date of payment. Arr. by date of payment. No index. 25 pp. 11 x 9 x $\frac{1}{2}$. 4 vols., 1929-32, town va.; 5 vols., 1933-- , rm. 2; first fl., T.H.

For assessments, see entries 39, 40.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 152, 255; II, pp. 17, 360; IV, 26, 397

3. Ibid., III, pp. not numbered

4. Ibid., IV, pp. 404, 490

5. Ibid., V, pp. 5, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53

VI. TOWN TREASURER¹

A town treasurer has been elected annually since 1766.² In 1769, 1782 and from 1785 through 1793, the treasurer was also elected as town clerk.³ From 1796 through 1813, with the exception of 1806,⁴ from 1820 through 1822, and consecutively since 1898, the clerk has also been elected as treasurer.⁵ During the period from 1882 through 1895, the treasurer was often elected as collector of taxes also.⁶

In addition to the following records, see entry 4 for verification of treasurer's expenditures 1836-68.

44. (ANNUAL REPORT OF TREASURER), 1875-76, 1906--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
- Contains:
- i. Assets, 1909--: Amount of balance on hand, uncollected taxes, and other money due town. 1909-26, 1939-- includes name of debtors, reason money due.
 - ii. Certification of treasurer's accounts by auditor, 1909-14. For certification of accounts 1892--, see entry 47.
 - iii. Disbursements, 1875-76, 1906--: Name of payee; amount, purpose of payment, 1875-76; amount of selectmen's and school committee's orders, 1906--.
 - iv. Funds, valuation of the following, 1920-29, 1933-36, 1938--: Eliza Miller, 1925, 1933-36, 1938--; Henry Taylor, 1920-23, 1933-36, 1938--; Major W. King, 1921-23, 1933-36, 1938--; Salmon Miller, 1925, 1933-36, 1938--; Smith-Hughes, 1920-29; Susan H. Howes, 1923, 1923-36, 1938--; town farm, 1921, 1923, 1933-36, 1938; Town School, 1920-23, 1933-36, 1938; Watson School, 1923, 1933-36, 1938; Whiting Street, 1923, 1933--.
 - v. Liabilities, 1909-26, 1939: Name of debtor, loan; amount, purpose of debt; amount of yearly payment due, place of payment, rate of interest charged.
 - vi. Receipts: Name of payer; amount, source of income; amount of balance on hand, previous year's tax collections.
- For selectmen's financial statement 1869, 1872-73, 1877--, see entry 3-ii.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, VI, pp. 5, 53

3. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 119, 169, 177, 255

4. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 16; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 47, 62, 101

5. Ibid., II, pp. 124, 136; IV, pp. 437, 489; VI, p. 53

6. Ibid., IV, pp. 340, 346, 352, 414

45. TREASURER'S RECORDS (Receipts and Disbursements), 1746--.

9 vols. Missing: 1811-12.

Receipts from taxes, state and county aid, bonds, reimbursements from other towns for pupils' tuition, trust funds, licenses, permits: Name of payer, department credited; amount, source, date of income. Disbursements for construction and care of roads, bridges, town institutions, state and county tax, departmental expenses, bond interest and principal: Name of payee, department charged; amount, purpose, date of payment. Arr. chron. No index. Hdw. 2 vols., 1746-64, 75 pp. 15 x 6 x 1; 7 vols., 1765--., 500 pp. 14 x 10 x 3. Town va., first fl., T.H.

46. RECEIPTS OF (Bounties Paid to) RETURNED SOLDIERS, 1861-63.

1 bdl.

Acknowledgment by Civil War soldiers of payment of bounty by town: Name of soldier, date of application for bounty; amount, date of payment; signature of soldier. Arr. by date of application. No index. Hdw. 8 x 2 x 2. Town va., first fl., T.H.

VII. AUDITOR¹

Two auditors were elected annually from 1899 through 1895.² Since 1896, the custom of electing one auditor annually has been followed.³

In addition to the following record, see entry 44-ii for certification of treasurer's accounts 1909-14.

47. (ANNUAL REPORT OF AUDITOR), 1892--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Certification of selectmen's, treasurer's, and tax collector's accounts.

VIII. SCHOOL COMMITTEE⁴

At the first town meeting, held in 1766, the sum of four pounds was voted for the use of the schools.⁵ In 1772 it was voted to divide the town into three school districts;⁶ but the number has been increased from

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. TOWN RECORDS, IV, pp. 382, 414

3. Ibid., IV, pp. 420, 390; VI, pp. 5, 53

4. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

5. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS) op. cit., p. 8

6. Ibid., p. 20

time to time. By 1799 the amount appropriated annually for the support of the schools had increased to four hundred pounds,¹ and by 1811 it was five hundred dollars.²

The first election of a committee to visit the schools took place in 1817, when ten were chosen.³ Thereafter until 1855, the usual procedure was to elect two school committees each year. The "superintending committee" merely visited and superintended the town schools; the "prudential committee", consisting of one representative from each school district, had the right "to hire and settle with teachers."⁴ In 1855 it was voted "that the inhabitants of each school district be authorized to choose a prudential committee for their respective districts."⁵ Thereafter we find the town records chronicling only the election of the superintending school committee, which has remained until the present time. Since 1858, it has consisted of three members, elected, one annually, for three-year terms.⁶

In 1878 it was voted to reduce the number of school districts to ten; and it is probable that the prudential school committees were dissolved at this time.⁷

Since 1900 the school committee has employed a superintendent of schools.⁸ It currently appoints a high school principal, school physician, school nurse, music supervisor, teacher of home economics and instructor of agriculture in addition to teachers and other employees.⁹ Ashfield, Cumington, Goshen, and Plainfield now constitute School Union No. 33, organized for the obvious economies involved in the appointment of a union superintendent of schools, toward whose salary the state contributes.¹⁰

In addition to the following records, see entry 3-vi for school-district statistics 1872-73.

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1. TOWN RECORDS, I, p. 140
 2. Ibid., I, p. 229
 3. Ibid., II, p. 49
 4. Ibid., II, pp. 179, 226
 5. Ibid., IV, p. 13
 6. Ibid., IV, p. 66; VI, p. 53
 7. Ibid., IV, p. 319
 8. Ibid., IV, p. 431
 9. Annual Reports, 1938, pp. 34-43
 10. Statement of Massachusetts Department of Education

Minutes and Reports
(See also entry 2-iv b, e)

48. MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS, 1880--. 3 vols.

Discussions and votes on appointment and salaries of teachers, purchase of textbooks, curricula, departmental expenditures; time, place, date of meeting. Arr. by date of meeting. No index. Hdw. 200 pp. 12 x 8 x 1. 2 vols., 1880-1919, town va., first fl., T.H.; 1 vol., 1920--, residence of Mrs. Hattie Guilford (secy.), Main St.

49. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE), 1880-81, 1889--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Contains:

- i. Attendance and enrollment statistics, 1880-81, 1889-1900, 1908: Names of schools, total and average membership, average and percentage attendance, length of school term, 1880-81, 1889, 1891-1900; names of pupils neither absent nor tardy during year, 1889-1900; total enrollment and attendance, 1908.
- ii. Finances, record of school, 1880-81, 1889, 1891--:
 - a. Appropriations, amount of, 1889, 1891.
 - b. Debts, 1880-81, 1891-92: Amount for each school district, 1880-81; names of teachers, amount of salary due each district, 1891-92.
 - c. Expenditures, 1881, 1889, 1891-1912: Amount, purpose of payments, 1881, 1891; name of employee, amount of payment for wages, 1889, 1891-1912.
 - d. Special funds, 1922-28, 1930--: Amount of payments from Smith-Hughes fund, 1922-28, 1930--; from George Reed fund, 1930--.
- iii. Narrative account of school activities, 1880-81, 1889-93: Recommendations concerning teachers, buildings, equipment. Includes: 1889, names of books in school library; 1891, high-school curriculum.
- iv. Organization of school committee, 1908-30: Names of committee members, dates of expiration of terms.
- v. School calendar, 1908--: Dates of holidays, commencing and ending of school terms.
- vi. School legislation, 1908-15, 1919.
- vii. School statistics, chart of, 1908: Amount of valuation of taxable town property, schoolhouses, and land; percentage of assessed town valuation expended for schools; population of town; number of male, female teachers; number of schoolhouses in use.

50. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS), 1901--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Narrative account of activities concerning teachers, pupils, buildings, studies, attendance, enrollment, discipline of pupils, finances; occasionally recommendations concerning Sanderson Academy. Includes: 1908-16, copy of school legislation; 1929, chart showing names of schools, average membership, per capita cost of schools. Also contains:

50. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS), (Cont'd).

- i. Attendance and enrollment statistics, 1901-31: Chart showing names of schools, teachers; average membership, attendance; total enrollment at each school, number of pupils between 7-14 years of age. Includes: 1908, chart of attendance showing names of schools, length of school terms, number of pupils enrolled; average pupil membership, attendance; percentage of attendance, number of pupils neither absent nor tardy; 1908-9, names of five schools with highest percentage of attendance; 1910, 1938, percentage of attendance of all schools.
- ii. Pupils' census, 1901, 1903, 1905, 1908-31: Number of pupils between 5-15, under 5, over 15 years of age, 1901, 1903, 1905, 1908-15; number of pupils under 7, between 14-16, over 16 years of age, 1916-31; number of illiterate minors, 1916-21.
- iii. Pupils' health statistics, 1913-14, 1916-18: Number of pupils in each school having defective sight or hearing; 1913-14, 1917; number of vaccinated pupils in each grade, 1916-17; chart showing number of pupils having various defects, percentage of country and city pupils having each defect, 1918.
- iv. Superintendency-union statistics, 1915-18: Names of towns in union; amount of superintendent's salary, State contribution to salary; proportion of salary paid by each town, average wage of teacher, number of pupils in each town, length of school year. 1917 includes amount of tax rate in each town, proportion of each town's tax assessed for schools, cost of teaching per pupil; 1918 includes number of pupils in each grade of each school.
- v. Teachers' statistics, 1908-17, 1929: Name of teacher; place of graduation, previous employment. Includes: 1908-17, amount of salary, date of appointment of teacher; 1910-17, town of residence of teacher.

51. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SCHOOL PHYSICIAN), 1910-16, 20---. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Narrative account of general health conditions; occasionally, number of pupils vaccinated, affected with disease; list of recommended improvements.

52. (ANNUAL REPORT OF SCHOOL NURSE), 1922---. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Number of visits made by nurse to homes of pupils, schools; number of pupils vaccinated, treated at clinics, examined by doctor; occasionally, account of health talks given pupils; number of pupils advised to have medical treatment, hospitalization; number of pupils having defective sight, hearing, lungs; recommendations for general health improvements.

53. (ANNUAL REPORT OF MUSIC SUPERVISOR), 1914-27, 32---. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Narrative account of progress made during year, list of musical functions in which class participated, recommendations for improvements of music class.
54. (ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SCHOOL SUBJECTS), 1928-30. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Narrative account of activities of music, dancing, exercise classes; accomplishments, objectives of work.

Pupils' Records

(See also entries 49-i, 50-i to iii, 51, 52, 60-ii)

55. (Pupils') ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT RECORDS 1842---. 132 vols. Name, address, age, grade, attendance record of pupil; names of teachers. Arr. alph. by name of pupil. No index. Hdw. 22 pp. 12 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{4}$. 126 vols., 1842-1934, rm. 1, first fl., T.H.; 6 vols., 1934--, residence of Eugene K. Currie (supt.), Main St.

56. SCHOOL REGISTER, 1890---. 382 vols. (dated). Name, address, age, date of birth, grade, date of enrollment, attendance record of pupil; name, address of parent or guardian; name of school, teacher. Includes total number of pupils enrolled, names of visitors. Arr. alph. by name of pupil. No index. Hdw. 14 pp. 12 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{4}$. Rm. 1, T.H.

Financial Records

(See also entries 44-iii, 49-ii, 50-iv, 60, 62)

57. LEDGER, 1913---. 2 vols. Record of expenditures for salaries, maintenance of school buildings, textbooks, stationery, supplies: Name of payee; amount, purpose, date of expenditure; voucher number. Arr. by date of expenditure. No index. Hdw. 50 pp. 24 x 16 x 5. 1 vol., 1913-23, town va., first fl., T.H.; 1 vol., 1923--, residence of Mrs. Eattie Guilford (secy.), Main St.

Sanderson Academy

(See also entries 50, 55, 56)

58. RECORDS - SANDERSON ACADEMY, 1817---. 2 vols. (dated). Minutes of trustees' meetings: Names of trustees, nature of business transacted; time, place, date of meeting. Includes bylaws of academy. Arr. by date of meeting. No index. Hdw. 200 pp. 16 x 12 x 1. Librarian's off., Belding Memorial Library.

School Committee - Sanderson Academy

(59-63)

59. (ANNUAL REPORT OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL), 1903--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Narrative account of school activities; findings and recommendations on matters pertaining to teachers, equipment, finances, studies. Includes: 1905-15, copy of graduation programs; 1905-10, 1915, names of high school graduates; 1919, 1925-26, high school curriculum; 1922, names of trustees of high school.

60. (ANNUAL REPORT OF AGRICULTURE INSTRUCTOR), 1914-17, 1919--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Narrative account of functioning of department, names of students winning prizes, total enrollment, 1913 includes copy of curriculum. Also contains:

- i. Finances, record of, 1933, 1935: Amount of expenditures for salaries, equipment, supplies; amount of receipts from State, tuition payments, special funds; net cost of department for previous year.
- ii. Pupils' projects, chart of, 1915: Amount of profit or loss, pupils' and families' income from projects; date of beginning, finishing projects.

61. (ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOME ECONOMICS), 1929--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Narrative account of departmental activities: Aims, size, accomplishments of class; recommendations for improvements.

62. SANDERSON ACADEMY TREASURER'S BOOKS, 1824--. 3 vols. (dated). Missing: 1867-77.

Expenditures for salaries, supplies, labor, repairs: Name of payee; amount, purpose, date of expenditure. Arr. by date of expenditure. No index. Fdw. 150 pp. 16 x 10 x 1. 1 vol., 1824-77, town va., first fl., T.H.; 2 vols., 1878--, librarian's off., Belding Memorial Library.

63. (INVENTORY AND REPORT OF EXECUTORS OF ESTATE OF ALVAN SANDERSON), 1817-45. 3 bdls. (dated).

Inventory of estate bequeathed for a school fund for Sanderson Academy: Location, description, valuation of property; conditions, date of will; report on debts, legacies paid by executors, balance in treasurer's account; signatures of members of committee on funds and president of academy. Arr. by subject. No index. Fdw. 10 x 4 x 1. Town va., first fl., T.H.

(64-65)

IX. TRUSTEES OF BELDING MEMORIAL LIBRARY¹

As indicated in the general historical sketch, private libraries existed in Ashfield for many years, beginning in 1815. Authorization to the selectmen to pay the Ashfield Library Association \$250 for the free use of its books to the people of the town was voted in 1893.² No free public library was established, however, until 1914, when Milo M. Belding of New York City donated the necessary funds to the town, in memory of his father and mother.³ Trustees were chosen the same year. They have always been seven in number, including two permanent members and five others elected, one annually, for five-year terms.⁴ The officers of the board are President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary; the board as a whole "designate at least three of its members as a finance committee, two of whom shall be the President and Treasurer. The said committee shall have and exercise over the finances of the trustees all the power of the board of trustees, subject to the approval of the board."⁵

Except where otherwise noted, all records are in the librarian's office, first floor, Belding Memorial Library.

64. RECORD OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BELDING MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 1914--. 1 vol.

Names of board members present; names, duties of officers elected; discussions, activities, recommendations of board; adoption of bylaws and regulations; time, place, date of meeting. Arr. by date of meeting. No index. Hdw. 500 pp. 16 x 12 x 2.

65. (ANNUAL REPORT OF LIBRARIAN), 1910, 1912-13, 1915-22. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Contains:

- i. Books in library, list of: Names of authors, titles of books added during year. For list of books added to library 1908-9, 1911, 1914, 1923--, see entry 2-ii.
- ii. Circulation statistics, 1915-22: Number, source of books added during year; number of books and magazines in library, in circulation; number of each classification of books loaned during year; occasionally, number of books loaned by branch libraries.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. TOWN RECORDS, IV, p. 408

3. COPY OF TRUST INSTRUMENT TO THE TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1914, 1 vol., typed. See entry 68

4. TOWN RECORDS, V, pp. 140, 149, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53

5. RECORD OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BELDING MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 1914-1939, 1 vol., ms., p. 3. See entry 64

66. (ANNUAL REPORT OF TREASURER OF LIBRARY), 1922--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.

Amount of cash on hand; amount of income from funds, fees, fines; amount of payments for salaries, books, maintenance; balance.

67. TREASURER'S BOOK (of Receipts and Expenditures) OF THE BELDING MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 1914--. 1 vol. (dated).

Receipts from interest on trust funds, town appropriations, fines: Name of payer; amount, source, date of income. Expenditures for books, salaries, supplies, maintenance: Name of payee; amount, purpose, date of expenditure. Arr. by date of transaction. No index. Hdw. 150 pp. 16 x 10 x 1.

68. COPY OF TRUST INSTRUMENT TO THE TOWN OF ASHFIELD, 1914. 1 vol.

Copy of deed of trust for establishment of free public library, created by Milo M. Belding, Jr.: Description, location of property; amount, conditions, date of deed. No arr. No index. Typed. 7 pp. 13 x 8 x 1/8. Desk.

X. BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE¹

There was apparently no necessity for the town to take cognizance of relief matters until 1809. In that year a committee was elected to determine the best method of providing for the poor, and in the same year it was decided that the selectmen, at their discretion, should "let out" the town paupers.² In 1813 this power of the selectmen was formally established by electing them overseers of the poor.³ The selectmen have continued to handle all relief matters to the present time. Occasionally it was voted that "the care of the poor be left with the Selectmen," and sometimes they were formally elected as overseers. Since 1928 the selectmen have been elected as members of the board of public welfare⁴

69. (MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE), 1883--.

In (Minutes of Selectmen's Meetings), entry 1,
Names of board members; discussion of aid to welfare applicants; amount, nature of aid; time, place, date of meeting.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 205-207

3. Ibid., I, p. 255

4. Ibid., IV, pp. 27, 231, 410; V, pp. 28, 386; VI, pp. 5, 53

70. (ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERSEERS OF THE POOR), 1875-76. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Amount of valuation of each item of property at town farm; amount, source of income; amount, purpose of payments; summary of payments, 1875 includes names of deceased paupers, inmates of town farm.

71. (REGISTER OF PERSONS SUPPORTED), 1905-29. 1 vol. (dated).
Name, age, occupation, birthplace, settlement status, physical and mental condition of recipient; names, nationalities of parents; date of application, discharge; case number. Arr. by case no. No index. Edw. 75 pp. 17 x 14 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

72. MILLER FUND, 1880-1925. 1 vol.
Receipts and expenditures of Miller fund for aid to poor. Receipts: Amount, source, date of income. Expenditures: Name of recipient; amount, date of aid; order number. Arr. by date of transaction. No index. Edw. 115 pp. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

For orders drawn on Miller fund 1891-1919, see entry 32-ii.

XI. AGENT FOR BOARD OF HEALTH¹

The selectmen have performed the functions of a board of health whenever the need arose. As such have appointed an agent annually since 1934.²

73. (MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD OF HEALTH), 1883--. In (Minutes of Selectmen's Meetings), entry 1.
Names of board members; discussion of cases, health regulations; time, place, date of meeting.

74. (ANNUAL REPORT OF AGENT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH), 1937--. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Number, record of cases of communicable diseases reported; number of children immunized against diseases; bacteria count, percentage of butter fat in milk samples.

75. (Record of) CONTAGIOUS DISEASES, 1890-1913. 2 vols. (dated).
System discont. 1913.
Name, address, age of patient; name of reporting physician, nature of disease, period of quarantine; date of report, remarks. Arr. by date of report. No index. Hdw. 50 pp. 15 x 11 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, first fl., T.H.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 72, 86, 92

XII. INSPECTOR OF MEATS¹

The predecessor of this office was an inspector of animals and provisions, first appointed by the selectmen in 1896.² In 1902 the selectmen appointed separate inspectors of animals and inspectors of meats. Although these offices were again combined several times during the next few years, a separate inspector of meats has been appointed by the selectmen each year since 1909.³

76. (Record of) INSPECTION OF MEATS, 1918--. 3 vols. (dated). Name of merchant; number, kind of animals inspected; date of inspection. Arr. by date of inspection. No index. Hdw. 50 pp. 5 x 3 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Residence of Archie Jenkins (inspector), Watson Road.

XIII. INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS¹

The predecessor of this office was a cattle inspector, appointed for a one-year term in 1895.⁴ Since 1896 the selectmen have appointed annually an inspector of animals, who at various times prior to 1909 has also been termed an inspector of animals and provisions or an inspector of animals and meats. Since 1909, however, a separate inspector of animals has been appointed annually.⁵

77. ORDER OF QUARANTINE, 1910-14. 4 vols. (dated). Record of cattle inspections: Name of cattle owner; number, breed, physical condition of cattle; results, date of inspection. Arr. by date of inspection. No index. Hdw. 75 pp. 12 x 6 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Town va., first fl., T.H.

XIV. INSPECTOR OF SLAUGHTERING¹

In 1925, 1935 and 1938, the selectmen appointed an inspector of slaughtering for a one-year term.⁶ The inspector keeps no records.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, *op. cit.*

2. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), p. 243

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 278, 288, 92

4. *Ibid.*, p. 241

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 243, 249, 268, 288, 92

6. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 342, 76, 89

XV. MILK INSPECTOR¹

This officer has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1937.² He keeps no records.

XVI. BURIAL AGENT¹

In 1840, a sexton, to be paid "by those who employs him" was elected, and in 1895 an "undertaker" was elected.³ The burial agent, the logical successor of these officers, has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1896.⁴ The burial agent keeps no records.

XVII. PARK COMMISSIONERS¹

In 1928, Milo and Anne Kirk Belding gave the town a plot of ground for a public park, and established a fund to maintain it. To guard the fund, and supervise the grounds, the office of park commissioners was established. In 1928 and 1929, they were appointed by the moderator; since 1930 they have been elected by the town meeting. They have always been three in number, chosen for three-year terms, one each year.⁵

78. (ANNUAL REPORT OF PARK COMMISSIONERS), 1928-35. In Annual Report of the Town Officers, entry 2.
Amount of appropriation; amount of expenditures for repairs, construction, labor; balance.

XVIII. SUPERINTENDENT OF STREETS¹

The duties of this office were first performed by surveyors of highways, elected annually in numbers varying from four at its inception in 1767 to

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 86, 89, 92

3. TOWN RECORDS, III; p. not numbered, (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), p. 241

4. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 243, 335, 356, 50, 92

5. TOWN RECORDS, V, pp. 385-386, 406, 466; VI, pp. 5, 54

thirty-three in 1843.¹ In 1869 it was voted that the selectmen be authorized to appoint the highway surveyors in the various districts.² These appointees became known as "road agents" during the next decade.³ Since 1895 the selectmen have appointed each year a superintendent of streets; until 1926, they have customarily appointed, in addition, several "highway agents", "surveyors of highways", or "road agents".⁴ The superintendent keeps no records.

XIX. TREE WARDEN⁵

Since 1902 a tree warden has been elected annually.⁶ He keeps no records.

XX. CONSTABLES

Except for a period from 1776 through 1782, when the number of constables varied from two to four, a single constable was elected annually from the inception of the town through 1905.⁷ At various times before 1893, and almost invariably from 1893 through 1905, the constable was also elected tax collector.⁸ Since 1906 three constables, who generally hold no other office, have been elected annually.⁹ The constables keep no records.

XXI. CHIEF OF POLICE⁵

The first special policeman was appointed by the selectmen for a one-year term in 1893.¹⁰ At various times since then, the selectmen

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1. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 11; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 148, 255; II, pp. 17, 361; III, pp. not numbered
 2. TOWN RECORDS, IV, p. 230
 3. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 222, 230, 239
 4. Ibid., pp. 241, 254, 288, 319, 342, 62, 92
 5. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.
 6. TOWN RECORDS, IV, pp. 467, 490; V, pp. 5, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53
 7. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 241; IV, pp. 47, 490
 8. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 51, 101, 139; II, p. 17; IV, pp. 404, 490
 9. Ibid., V, pp. 5, 466; VI, pp. 5, 53
 10. Ibid., IV, p. 405

have appointed one or more special police whenever necessary.¹ A chief of police has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1934.² The chief keeps no records.

XXII. FIRE CHIEF³

From 1916 through 1933 the selectmen appointed each year varying numbers of fire engineers.⁴ They are now chosen directly by the fire chief, who has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1934.⁵ The fire chief keeps no records.

XXIII. DOG OFFICER³

A dog officer has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1936.⁶ He keeps no records.

XXIV. SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES⁵

From 1838 through 1847, the sealer of weights and measures was elected annually by the town meeting; thereafter, with the exception of scattered early years during which he was again elected by the town meeting, or the office was unfilled, the sealer has been appointed annually by the selectmen.⁷

79. RECORD BOOK FOR WEIGHTS AND MEASURES, 1908--. 2 vols. Missing: 1912-19.

Record of testing of weights, scales, measures, gasoline pumps: Name of merchant; results, date of test; amount of fee. Includes total number of devices sealed, condemned, adjusted. Arr. by date of test. No index. Hdw. on ptd. form. 49 pp. 21 x 12 x $\frac{1}{2}$. Safe, rm. 2, T.H.

1. TOWN RECORDS, IV, p. 421; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 286, 292, 319, 67

2. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 72, 76, 92

3. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

4. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 319, 342

5. Ibid., pp. 72, 92

6. Ibid., pp. 83, 92

7. TOWN RECORDS, III; IV, pp. 13, 47, 77, 221; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 254, 356, 50, 92

XXV. FOREST WARDEN¹

From 1898 through 1908 the selectmen appointed one or more forest fire wards annually.² They have appointed a single forest warden annually since 1909.³ The forest warden keeps no records.

XXVI. MOTH SUPERINTENDENT¹

This officer, originally called "superintendent for suppression of gypsy moth", has been appointed annually by the selectmen since 1911, with the possible exception of certain isolated years when the records are silent.⁴ The superintendent keeps no records.

XXVII. PUBLIC WEAIGHER

It may be assumed that the office of weigher of coal, extant from 1910 through 1928, was the lineal ancestor of this office. The weigher of coal was appointed annually by the selectmen.⁵ The selectmen have appointed a public weigher for a one-year term in 1938 and 1939.⁶ This officer keeps no records.

XXVIII. SURVEYORS OF WOOD AND BARK¹

Two surveyors of wood were elected for a one-year term in 1793.⁷ One measurer of wood was elected in 1796, 1799 and 1800.⁸ In 1837 the office was revived as "measurer of wood and bark", and three were elected.⁹ The number elected annually thereafter varied from one to five, and since 1878 two or more measurers (or surveyors) of wood and bark have been "nominated" each year by the moderator.¹⁰ The surveyors keep no records.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 254, 286

3. Ibid., pp. 288, 356, 50, 92

4. Ibid., pp. 303, 331, 50, 92

5. Ibid., pp. 292, 350

6. Ibid., pp. 89, 92

7. TOWN RECORDS, I, p. 107

8. Ibid., I, pp. 120, 139, 145

9. Ibid., III

10. Ibid., IV, pp. 319, 488; VI, pp. 28, 54

XXIX. SURVEYORS OF LUMBER¹

One or more surveyors of lumber were elected annually from 1790 through 1877, with the exception of a period from 1804 through 1816 when the records are silent concerning this office.² Since 1878 the moderator has "nominated" two or more officers each year to this post.³ The surveyors keep no records.

XXX. FENCE VIEWERS¹

Fence viewers were elected annually from 1766 through 1920. They varied in number from two to five, the usual number, however, being three.⁴ Since 1921 the three fence viewers have been appointed annually by the selectmen.⁵ The fence viewers keep no records.

XXXI. FIELD DRIVERS¹

Field drivers were regularly elected each year from 1791 through 1903. From 1904 through 1920, the moderator generally appointed the field drivers. Since 1921 the selectmen have appointed these officers. Originally, the number elected was two; during the nineteenth century, the number varied from three to nine; more recently, the number of drivers appointed has generally been four.⁶ The field drivers keep no records.

XXXII. MODERATOR¹

A moderator has been elected at each town meeting since the first in 1768. Since 1878 the moderator has "nominated" the minor offices of surveyors of wood and bark and surveyors of lumber.⁸ The moderator keeps no records.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see *Town and City Government in Massachusetts*, *op. cit.*

2. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 93, 161; II, pp. 45, 361; IV, pp. 13, 238, 312

3. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 319, 325, 471, 488; V, pp. 3, 464; VI, pp. 28, 54

4. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 145, 256; II, pp. 2, 361; IV, pp. 13, 490; V, pp. 5, 253

5. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 331, 50, 92

6. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 93, 256, II, pp. 2, 361; IV, pp. 13, 404, 497; V, pp. 3, 248; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 331, 350, 92

7. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 256; VI, pp. 3, 48

8. TOWN RECORDS, IV, pp. 319, 325, 471, 488; V, pp. 3, 464; VI, pp. 28, 54

PART C. DEFUNCT OFFICES

XXXIII. TYTHINGMEN¹

From 1766 through 1836 tythingmen were elected each year. They varied in number from two to six.² No records for this office have been found.

XXXIV. SEALER OF LEATHER¹

This office existed in Ashfield from 1766 through 1841. Generally, one sealer was elected annually, although on a few occasions two were elected.³ No records for this office have been found.

XXXV. CLERK OF THE MARKET¹

A clerk of the market was elected regularly each year from 1766 through 1794.⁴ In 1795 two were elected, after which the office became defunct.⁵ No records for this office have been found.

XXXVI. WARDENS¹

Two wardens were elected annually from 1766 through 1770, and from 1784 through 1790.⁶ No records for this office have been found.

11. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, 1, 256; II, 2, 361; III, pp. not numbered

3. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, 1, 212; II, 106, 361; III, pp. not numbered

4. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 107

5. TOWN RECORDS, I, p. 114

6. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 56, 83

XXXVII. DEER REEVES¹

Two deer reeves were elected for a one-year term in 1766, 1767, 1769, 1770, 1776, and 1778.² In 1768, 1781 and 1783 one deer reef was elected.³ In the intervening years, none were elected or the records are missing. None were elected after 1783. No records for this office have been found.

XXXVIII. HOGREEVES¹

Hogreeves (also spelt reafs, reefes, rieffs, reiffs, reefs and on occasion called hog constables) were elected annually, in numbers varying from one to seven, from 1766 through 1835.⁴ The office was defunct thereafter. No records for this office have been found.

XXXIX. POUNDKEEPER¹

A poundkeeper was regularly elected each year from 1770 through 1844.⁵ From 1845 through 1901, after which the office became defunct, the selectmen generally appointed the poundkeeper.⁶ On many occasions, however, none was chosen; at other times he was elected by the town meeting as before, and twice the field drivers were "authorized to appoint some suitable person to the office of Pound Keeper."⁷ No records for this office have been found.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see Town and City Government in Massachusetts, op. cit.

2. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., pp. 8, 11, 16, 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 8

3. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 15; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 40, 57

4. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 8, 22; TOWN RECORDS, I, 1, 145, 256; II, 2, 162, 361

5. (SCRAPS OF PLANTATION AND TOWN RECORDS), op. cit., p. 18; TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 1, 93, 256; II, pp. 2, 361; III, pp. not numbered

6. TOWN RECORDS, op. cit., III, pp. not numbered; IV, pp. 13, 77, 390; (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), pp. 241, 249, 264

7. TOWN RECORDS, III, pp. not numbered; IV, pp. 254, 312

XL. PACKER OF BEEF AND PORK¹

In 1790, 1791 and 1794, a packer of beef and pork was elected for a one-year term.² No records for this office have been found.

XLI. COLLECTOR OF MINISTERIAL TAX¹

This office was elected annually from 1779 through 1787, with the possible exception of the years 1783 and 1785, when the records are missing.³ There is no further information concerning this office in the local records. No records for this office have been found.

XLII. SURVEYOR OF SHINGLES¹

In 1805 one surveyor of shingles and clapboards was elected for a one-year term.⁴ The office, now known as surveyor of shingles, was revived in 1814 when two were elected.⁵ In 1815 and 1816 one surveyor was elected; thereafter the records are silent concerning this office.⁶ No records for this office have been found.

XLIII. INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS¹

In 1895 the selectmen appointed a janitor of the town hall.⁷ He was succeeded by an inspector of buildings, appointed annually by the selectmen from 1896 through 1936.⁸ The office has since become defunct. No records for this office have been found.

1. For the statutory origin and development of this office, see TOWN AND CITY GOVERNMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS, op. cit.

2. TOWN RECORDS, I, pp. 84, 91, 107

3. Ibid., I, pp. 13, 74

4. Ibid., I, p. 170

5. Ibid., II, p. 2

6. Ibid., II, pp. 18, 31

7. (MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETINGS), p. 241

8. Ibid., pp. 243, 356, 50, 83

(80-82)

State Archives Relating to Ashfield

All archives are located in room 438, State House, Boston. References are to the number, title and page of the volume where archives may be found.

80. (PETITION OF NARRAGANSETT PROPRIETORS FOR ADDITIONAL LAND),
Dec. 11, 1739. 1 sheet.

Petition of John Foster and Edward Shove, agents for the lands granted to a number of the Narragansett soldiers in a township called No. 4, to Governor Jonathan Belcher, council, and house of representatives, showing that a tract of land at a place called Quabin supposed to contain 15,000 acres falls short by eleven or twelve hundred acres, partly because of an ancient grant to one Mr. Star lying within the limits of said tract and partly because of ponds and low sunken grounds which were not known when tract was first laid out; the petitioners pray for an equivalent tract of land on the west side of Hatfield, between Deerfield and Huntstown. Read in house of representatives on December 28, 1739 and ordered that petitioners be granted 3500 acres of land on north side of their land between the towns of Hatfield and a place called Huntstown, the land to run parallel with their north line; the petitioners to return a plat thereof to the court within twelve months for confirmation. Read in council and concurred January 20, 1739/40. Consented to by (Governor) J(onathan) Belcher. Hdw. 1 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXIV, "Towns 1730-42", p. 475.)

For printed version of this petition and order, see Province Acts and Resolves, XII, pp. 647, 648.

81. (REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL LAND), 1739.
1 sheet.

Report of committee to whom was referred the petition of John Foster and Edward Shove, acting in behalf of the Narragansett proprietors of Township No. 4, stating that the petitioners should have, as an equivalent to the great quantities of ponds and land belonging to Mr. Star, which were included in the petitioners' original grant, 3500 acres of that land that they pray for, to be laid out on the north side of their land between Hatfield and Huntstown, the line to run parallel with their north line. Hdw. 1 p. 6 x 7. (CXIV, "Towns, 1730-42", p. 477.)

82. (REPORT ON BOUNDARY OF LAND GRANT), June 6, 1740. 1 sheet.

Report of Nathaniel Kellogg, surveyor, to general court stating that the boundary of the grant of 600 acres of land made by the said court to Reverend Experience Mayhew, minister of the gospel among the Indians at Martha's Vineyard, is a maple tree a certain distance from southwest corner of Huntstown. Hdw. 1 p. 8 x 12. (XII, "Ecclesiastical", p. 107.)

83. (PETITION TO DEFINE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HUNTSTOWN AND DEERFIELD), Mar. 17, 1741/2. 1 sheet.

Petition of Adam Cushing for himself and the rest of the proprietors of Huntstown to Governor William Shirley, council, and house of representatives concerning land lying west of, and adjoining, Deerfield, granted to heirs of persons in the expedition to Canada in 1690, showing that the committee employed to lay out said township have divided the land into lots; and the proprietors have settled and cleared their land, and established a place for locating a meetinghouse; showing further that, when bounds of said town were perambulated, application was made to town of Deerfield for location of their west bounds, which they refused; whereupon petitioners were obliged to search out the additional grant made to Deerfield in 1712, on petition of Reverend John Williams and others; further, that in order to lay out township they began at the river on line between Hatfield and Deerfield and measured 9 miles, then ran northward a line parallel with river about seven miles from their east bounds, then extended west into woods to make the contents six square miles, according to grant, Deerfield lays claim to many lots cleared and settled by virtue of their plan, confirmed by this court, provided it did not exceed the grant but which the memorialist thinks has far exceeded it. Therefore, the memorialist, wishing to make a certainty of the matter prays the governor and general court to appoint a committee to fix bounds between Deerfield and Huntstown, according to the true meaning of the Deerfield grant so that the petitioners may be certain of clearing their own land, or be afforded some other suitable relief. Read in house of representatives, March 25, 1742, and petitioners ordered to serve selectmen of Deerfield with copy of this petition so that cause may be shown why petition should not be granted. Read and concurred in council, March 25, 1742. Consented to by (Governor) W(illiam) Shirley. Read again in council, June 2, 1742, and, since it appears Deerfield has not been duly notified, ordered that further consideration of petition be referred to Thursday, 24th inst., if court is sitting, otherwise to first Thursday of next sitting of court; also that petitioners serve selectmen of Deerfield with copy of this petition, also of this order, that they may show cause why prayer should not be granted. Hdw. 2 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXIV, "Towns, 1730-42", pp. 700-701.)

For printed version of above petition and order, see Province Acts and Resolves, XIII, p. 95

84. (REPLY OF DEERFIELD TO PETITION FOR DEFINING BOUNDARIES), June 1, 1742. 1 sheet.

Elijah Williams, a selectman of Deerfield, replies to Governor William Shirley, council, and house of representatives, on petition of Major Adam Cushing, that selectmen of Deerfield were never served with copy of petition, as ordered by the court, until the Saturday before the court's sitting, and therefore had no opportunity to confer on said matter, hence are not fully able to answer; but respondent, so far as he is acquainted with affair, would answer that when application was received by Deerfield to show their west bounds, they sent a man at the town's expense to the

84. (REPLY OF DEERFIELD TO PETITION FOR DEFINING BOUNDARIES), (Cont'd) surveyor at Northampton who laid out the town, to obtain their papers which had been mislaid and could not be found; but a committee was appointed last year to consider fixing the bounds between said towns; that the town of Deerfield will not oppose the appointment of a committee to fix the bounds, provided the expense thereof be paid by the petitioner or the proprietors of Huntstown. The respondent believes it will be fruitless to send a committee from the court to settle above bounds for there are grants to each town that cannot be altered by any committee from the court, but disputes relative thereto must be settled in the common laws; moreover, he would add that Samuel Jackson and Joseph Blanchard together with the petitioner, (and) Major Cushing, upon respondents' memorial respecting the Deerfield plat confirmed last year, were appointed a committee to consider the petitioner's plat, and the committee reported that they were of the opinion that the plat contained the just quantity of the grant, laid out without prejudice to the town or other lands and most conformable to the grants to Deerfield, wherefore the court accepted and confirmed the same. Signed by Elijah Williams. Hdw. 2 pp. $7\frac{1}{2}$ x $12\frac{1}{2}$. (CXIV, "Towns, 1730-42", pp. 703, 704.)

85. (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL LAND), Dec. 7, 1742. 1 sheet. Memorial of Richard Faxon and Nathaniel Kellogg, committee for the proprietors of Huntstown to Governor William Shirley, council, and house of representatives, showing that said Hunt and others had a grant made them by the general court six miles square, of which a plan was taken, returned and confirmed, bounded east as supposed on Deerfield west line; but the May session of the general assembly determined that in said plan was contained 5362 acres of land which belonged to the town of Deerfield, thus depriving the proprietors of the most valuable part of their land, and taking from them many of their settled lots; therefore, the memorialists ask the Governor and court to grant them an equivalent grant for the land so lost, from adjoining lands to the north and west of said township. Read in house of representatives, December 7, 1742, and ordered that an equivalent grant be made the proprietors of Huntstown, beginning at the northeast corner of Mr. Mayhew's grant, thence running north eleven degrees east to Boston Township No. 1; thence eastward including all unappropriated land bounding east on Deerfield west line and north on the south line of Boston Townships Nos. 1 and 2, being near 8000 acres exclusive of the grants made to Messrs. Hunt, Field, and Childs within said tract; inasmuch as said proprietors have been impeded in their settlement by the town of Deerfield, as before mentioned, it is voted they be allowed two years longer to fulfill the conditions of the grant. Read and concurred in council, December 9, 1742. Hdw. 2 pp. $7\frac{1}{2}$ x 12. (CXIV, "Towns, 1730-42", pp. 1, 2.)

86. (ORDER CONCERNING LAND GRANT AND FISHING RIGHTS), Mar. 1, 1743. 1 sheet.

Ordered by house of representatives that 8000 acres of land be granted the proprietors of Huntstown as an equivalent for the land originally laid out to them but found to be within the town of Deerfield; the bounds to begin at the southeast corner of a farm laid out to Dr. Jno. Bernard's heirs,

86. (ORDER CONCERNING LAND GRANT AND FISHING RIGHTS), (Cont'd).

from thence to run on the easterly line of Mr. Mayhew's and above-mentioned farm to the northeast corner of said Mayhew's farm; thence north 8 degrees east to Boston Township No. 2, and easterly on said line and including all land between that and the north line of Huntstown until it make the quantity of 8000 acres, exclusive of such grants as are already laid out in said tract and the whole tract of land belonging to Ebenezer Hunt, who was admitted to the town of Huntstown as an additional grantee, over and above the 60 grantees first admitted; also that the salmon fishing falls in Deerfield River be reserved to the use of the public, with 20 acres of land around them, for conveniency of fishing, provided that the proprietors, by a surveyor and chainmen, under oath, do return a plan of said 800 acres to this court within 12 months for confirmation. In council read and concurred March 2, 1743/4. Hdw. 1 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12. (CXIV, "Towns, 1730-42", p. 213.)

For printed version of above, see Province Acts and Resolves, XIII, pp. 340, 341.

87. (PETITION FOR MILITARY PROTECTION), Mar. 3, 1756. 1 sheet.

Petition of Chileab Smith in behalf of the plantation called Huntstown to Governor William Shirley and general court stating that, since settling in Huntstown, the petitioners had suffered great hardships on account of lack of inhabitants; and since the war said petitioners had heard many times that the enemy was at hand, even a few hours' distance; that said petitioners had to flee for their lives leaving their houses and throwing some household goods amongst the weeds and bushes for want of a common defence as that allowed other frontiers with wives and children to protect; petitioners stated that they begged Colonel Israel Williams for protection but no help was given, excepting a guard of ten men on Thursdays to help gather part of their crop; that they had existed for nearly two years, with their women and children scattered amongst strangers, the men obliged to work on their land without a guard except one of their own making; that one of said petitioners had to spend a considerable time in the woods of Huntstown to watch for the enemy; therefore, petitioners prayed for such protection as the court in its wisdom should see fit; petitioners also stated there were twenty-nine persons then living in Huntstown, that fifty-four persons were scattered away from Huntstown but also were in need of protection. Signed by Thomas Phillips, Moses Smith, Wetheral Whitterin, Reuben Ellis, Mathew Ellis and Richard Phillips. Statement that one of the subscribers did not then live in Huntstown on account of the war; and that some of the other proprietors had not had opportunity to set their hands to said petition, but petitioners believed they also wanted protection. Includes diagram showing Fatfield to be northwest about fifteen miles from Huntstown, and Deerfield west about eight miles from Huntstown. Hdw. 2 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVII, "Towns, 1755-1762", pp. 113, 114.)

88. (PETITION FOR PROTECTION FROM INDIANS), July 3, 1756. 2 sheets. Petition of Chileab Smith and other inhabitants of Huntstown to His Excellency, Governor William Shirley, council, and house of representatives, stating that not withstanding some encouragement from the governor and council and their request for protection, the court not being in session, their previous petition had been sent to the council called together by the governor; said council had sent their advice to Colonel Williams, but no help was furnished; petitioners also stated that they settled in Huntstown at the court's command, and were necessarily employed in defense of their country, themselves, wives, and children; that especially this summer the petitioners had to scout from Huntstown to Deerfield, east and west, sometimes being shut up in the fort and sometimes working together to guard themselves; thus petitioners believed they afforded some protection to Hatfield, Deerfield and their villages; petitioners stated that the aforesaid duties had gravely impoverished and weakened them, and the town was in great danger of capture by the enemy; therefore petitioners prayed for some strength in men, and that they, the petitioners, be put under the common pay of the garrison soldiers from the previous March until their harvest ended. Read in house of representatives, July 8, 1756, and voted that the lieutenant-governor be desired to give directions to Colonel Israel Williams, that he order a suitable number of the forces destined to scout on the western frontiers for the protection of the petitioners and inhabitants of said places as he shall judge necessary. Read in council, July 8, 1756, and concurred. Consented to by (Lieutenant Governor Spencer) Phips. Edw. 2 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12. (CXVII, "Towns, 1755-1762", pp. 115-116.)

For printed version of this petition, see Province Acts and Resolves, XV, 1753-1756, p. 567.

89. (PETITION TO ACT ON PETITION), July 17, 1756. 1 sheet. Petition of inhabitants of neighboring towns of Huntstown to the governor, council, and general court, stating they were sensible in some measure of the distressed condition of the people of Huntstown, and the great importance of their being encouraged and supported in their town which was situated in the frontier of Deerfield, Hatfield, and numerous scattered villages, and that they earnestly desire the governor and the court to consider all cases of Huntstown and neighboring towns, which were very distressing on account of the Indians, and that an answer be given to their request which they thought reasonable to all acquainted with their distressed circumstances and hard service in defence of themselves and country at their own expense without any reward. Edw. 1 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12. (CXVII, "Towns, 1755-1762", p. 117.)

90. (PETITION FOR SETTLING OF LAND BY NONRESIDENT PROPRIETORS), Feb. 26, 1760. 1 sheet. Petition of Chileab Smith and others of Huntstown to Governor Thomas Pownall, council, and general court, showing that for some time they had been under great and distressing difficulties due to neglect of their duty by some of the proprietors. In accordance with the court's commands in the grant of the township, petitioners had settled on their lands expecting other proprietors to do likewise, which they refused; troubled

90. (PETITION FOR SETTLING OF LAND BY NONRESIDENT PROPRIETORS), (Cont'd)

by the war, they were forced to build a town fort at their expense, and being so few, their highway costs had fallen chiefly on the inhabitants. Having petitioned the proprietors in a legal meeting to see if they would help pay for the town fort, also for a necessary bridge over a small river in the midst of the town, and to see if they would settle their lands, and having been denied their requests, they petitioned the court to oblige nonresident proprietors to settle their lands or give them to others who would, in order that petitioners might enjoy privileges of a civil and sacred nature as a Christian town belonging to the King. Read in house of representatives, March 21, 1760, and ordered that petitioners serve the clerk of the proprietors of the plantation a written copy of the petition so that they may show cause at the next May session why it should not be granted. Hdw. 2 pp. 8 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVII, "Towns, 1755-62", pp. 570-571.)

91. (ACT OF INCORPORATION), June 21, 1765. 1 sheet.

An act erecting the new plantation called Huntstown in Hampshire County into a town by the name of Ashfield: Whereas it has been represented to this (general) court that the erecting of the plantation called Huntstown into a town will contribute to the growth thereof and remedy many inconveniences, be it enacted by the governor, council, and house of representatives that the aforesaid plantation, bounded on the east by Deerfield, on the south, partly by Narragansett Township No. 4, and partly by province land; on the west partly by province land and partly by Bernard's, Mayhew's, and Hatfield land; and on the north by province land; more particularly described in a plan of said township, confirmed in the present session of the general court, be and hereby is erected into a town by the name of Ashfield; further that Thomas Williams is empowered to issue his warrant to some principal inhabitant of said town to notify inhabitants qualified to vote to meet at such time and place as shall therein be set forth, to choose officers required by law to manage town affairs; further, that all taxes already raised for settling and supporting a minister, building a meetinghouse and clearing and repairing roads be levied on the several proprietors of the plantation. Read twice in council (lacking clause given below) and passed to be engrossed, June 18, 1765. Read twice in house of representatives and amended to include the following clause, already incorporated above: " . . . more particularly described in a plan of said township, confirmed in the present session of the General Court" Read in council, June 20, 1765, and concurred. Passed June 21, 1765. Hdw. 2 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVIII, "Towns, 1763-1764", pp. 135, 136.)

For printed version of this act, see Province Acts and Resolves, IV, p. 815.

92. (PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ACT CREATING ASHFIELD), Feb. 17, 1768.
2 sheets.

Whereas the last paragraph of the act of incorporation (entry 91) provided that taxes already raised for support of minister, building of meetinghouse, roads, etc., be levied according to the interests of the respective proprietors; and whereas said taxes have been so levied, but because of the uncertainty of the proprietors whether to proceed as a town or propriety, they have been unable to collect said taxes and meetings of proprietors have ceased; be it therefore enacted that, upon application of five of the proprietors of said town in writing to a justice of the peace for a meeting, the justice of the peace is empowered to issue a warrant to one of the proprietors, requiring him to notify the inhabitants of the time, place, and occasion of said meeting; further, that the proprietors, having made application, are enabled to agree upon a different method of calling meetings, also to grant taxes, collect past and future taxes, and choose town officers; further that the two taxes already agreed upon by said proprietors, and such further levies as they may raise pursuant to direction of this act, shall be levied equally upon each 250 acres of land laid out or voted to be laid out to each right, until further order of this court. Read in house of representatives for first time on February 2, 1768, and for second and third times February 5, 1768, and passed to be engrossed. Read first time in council, February 5, 1768; read second time on February 17, 1768, and non-concurred. Edw. 3 pp. 5 x 6½ to 8 x 12½. (CXVIII, "Towns, 1763-74". pp. 336, 338.)

93. (PETITION FOR EXEMPTION FROM TAXES FOR SUPPORT OF MINISTER),
May 24, 1768. 2 sheets.

Petition of sundry inhabitants of Ashfield to Governor Francis Bernard, council, and house of representatives, stating that half of said petitioners settled in said town, then called Huntstown, before the last war, built a fort and defended themselves for three years before receiving any help from the soldiers; during the summers of said period, the proprietors could do little else but guard themselves, scout in the woods to see if the enemy was in the neighborhood, thus affording some protection to the towns below Huntstown. When the war was over, the petitioners being Anabaptists, proceeded to settle a church and a minister, who was ordained with the assistance of three neighboring churches of like constitution; petitioners were about to build a meetinghouse but were forced to stop because of the settling in town of a number of men of contrary persuasion; these persons with the help of some other proprietors comprised a majority and voted to raise money to build another meetinghouse. Petitioners' opponents have also settled another minister, granting him a large settlement and salary, and are compelling the petitioners to pay their equal proportion with them for said minister's support. Petitioners feel that if they are obliged to pay, many of them must be turned out of their houses and lands. Therefore, petitioners pray that their case be taken into consideration, and they and their lands be freed from paying any more toward the maintenance of said minister and meetinghouse; petitioners are willing to pay their province tax and all others except the

93. (PETITION FOR EXEMPTION FROM TAXES, etc.), (Cont'd) one before mentioned. Read in house of representatives, May 31, 1768, and ordered that petitioners notify the town and proprietors of Ashfield by serving the respective clerks with a copy of the petition to show cause at next sitting of this court why petitioners' prayer should not be granted, and further taxes, so far as they concern petitioners, be suspended in the meantime. Read in council, June 1, 1768 and concurred. Consented to by (Governor) Francis Bernard. Hdw. 2 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 512, 513.)

94. (REPLY BY OTHER INHABITANTS OF ASHFIELD TO PETITION OF MEMBERS OF ANABAPTIST SOCIETY), June 9, 1768. 1 sheet. Reply of sundry inhabitants, twelve in number, stating they have no objection to the Anabaptist Society being set free from paying toward the support of a worship to which they do not belong. Hdw. 1 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", p. 557.)

95. (AMENDMENT TO ACT CREATING ASHFIELD), June 15, 1768. 2 sheets. Whereas the act of incorporation (entry 91) among other things provided that past and future taxes raised for support of the minister, building a meetinghouse, clearing and repairing roads, be levied on the proprietors of said plantation according to their interests; and whereas such paragraph is insufficient for the purpose designed and some provision is necessary to enable proprietors of lands in said town to levy and collect money by them granted, and to grant, assess, levy, and collect such further taxes as may be necessary; be it enacted that proprietors of lands in said town, divided or undivided, are empowered, at any meetings named and called according to law, to make choice of a clerk, treasurer, assessors, and other officers that proprietors of common and undivided land may choose; they may also agree upon the raising, assessing, levying, and collecting of all such sums of money as they judge necessary for purposes cited above; also that the money so granted shall be assessed upon the lands of each original right already laid out or agreed to be laid out, and every part of said 250 acres of each right shall be, and is, subject to the payment of its proportional part of such money so granted; and whereas, before the act of incorporation, a tax of 40 shillings on each original right was agreed upon and assessed by said proprietors and only partly collected, and since the act of incorporation another tax of 20 shillings was levied on each original right and no part collected; be it further enacted that what remains uncollected of the two taxes shall be levied on the said 250 acres laid out or voted to be laid out, and every part of said 250 acres shall be liable to the payment of its proportional part; that proprietors neglecting or refusing to pay their part of said taxes shall have their lands sold by the assessors, according to law. Read first time in house of representatives, June 13, 1768, second and third times on June 14, 1768, and passed to be engrossed. Read first time in council, June 14, 1768; read second time, June 15, 1768, and passed in concurrence to be engrossed. Hdw. 3 pp. 8 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVII, "Towns, 1763-74", pp. 365-367.)

96. (CERTIFICATION OF DELIVERY OF PETITION), June 16, 1768.
1 sheet.

Certificate of Nathan Chapin and Chileab Smith, Jr. as to delivery of a copy of the petition of the Anabaptists of Ashfield to the proprietors' clerk of the town, as required by a court order. Hdw. 1.p. 7 x 2 3/4. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", p. 563.)

97. (PETITION OF ANABAPTIST SOCIETY FOR RELIEF FROM CONTINUED GRIEVANCES), May 22, 1769. 1 sheet.

Petition of Chileab Smith, John Blackmer, and Nathan Chapin in behalf of the Anabaptist Church and Society of Ashfield to Governor Francis Bernard, council, and house of representatives, stating that in a previous petition (entry 93), presented on May 24, 1768, the petitioners manifested the opposition they have for a long time been experiencing in being forced to pay for the settlement and salary of a minister, and the building of a meetinghouse for a society to which they did not belong; in consequence of said petition the court ordered that collection of all taxes concerning petitioners be suspended until the next sitting of the court; the petitioners, in compliance with the order of the court, delivered a copy of the said petition to the respective clerks of towns and proprietors on June 16, 1768; yet the other proprietors took no notice of the act but said they had power by another act to gather money or fees as before, and accordingly have called another meeting and voted more money to be paid out by the petitioners. When petitioners refused to pay, the other proprietors had petitioners' lands posted for sale; but on the day of public vendue, having a suspicion they had not acted according to law, stopped action. Said proprietors were confident they could force petitioners to pay or sell their lands. Petitioners stated that, after settling their minister, called by the whole church and most of the inhabitants of the town, they had paid at several vendues the sum of ten pounds upon each right, but none of the money had been allowed said petitioners for their minister or the building of their meetinghouse; also that the proprietors had posted petitioners' lands for eight pounds upon each right, pretending it to be chiefly for the minister and meetinghouse, and a small part for highways. Petitioners feel it useless to complain as the proprietors said they would be of no assistance to petitioners as they were of a different faith, and petitioners believed that unless they got relief they would be stripped of all their lands, some of which had been sold for a small part of their worth. Therefore petitioners prayed that their distress be taken into consideration, and that money taken from petitioners for support of other proprietors' minister and meetinghouse be returned to them for support of their minister and meetinghouse; and that they be freed from further support of a society to which they did not belong. Hdw. 2 pp. 7 1/2 x 12. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 561, 562.)

98. (CERTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH IN ASHFIELD BY THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION), Sept. 14, 1769. 1 sheet.

The Baptist Association, meeting at Warren, Rhode Island, September 14, 1769, certified that upon mature examination of the religious principles

98. (CERTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH IN ASHFIELD BY THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION), Sept. 14, 1769. (Cont'd).

and constitution of a Church of Christ in Ashfield, under the pastoral care of Reverend Ebenezer Smith, the said association received the Ashfield Baptist Church into fellowship as being of the same faith and order; signed by Ezekiah Smith, moderator, and Samuel Stillman, clerk, for the association. Hdw. 1 p. 6 x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", p. 564.)

99. (ACCOUNT OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE ANABAPTIST CHURCH IN ASHFIELD, 1769). 2 sheets.

The Anabaptist Society was established June 27, 1761; Ebenezer Smith was ordained minister on August 20, 1761; the society had thirty communicants in 1769. At that time said society comprised by far the major part of the inhabitants and were about to build a meetinghouse, but were forced to desist on account of a combination of men of a different persuasion and of nonresident proprietors who outnumbered them at the polls. The opposing society had raised large sums of money for, and built, another meetinghouse; they had also settled a minister and granted him a large salary. The general court had granted a considerable tract of land to the first minister settled in town but said opposing society had seized said lands and installed their minister thereon. Said opposing society forced the sum of ten pounds to be paid on each right, chiefly for their minister and meetinghouse; also said opposing society raised a tax of one hundred and fifty pounds for that use. In 1769 said society voted a tax of 507 pounds wholly for that use and posted the land belonging to members of the Anabaptist Society for sale to force them to pay an equal proportion thereof, allowing the Anabaptists nothing for their meetinghouse and minister. At present the Anabaptists see nothing but that their land will be sold and they disinherit for maintenance of a society to which they do not belong. The Baptists had appealed to the general court but received no relief. Signed by Chileab Smith and Ebenezer Smith. In the year 1762, Ephraim Marble, Reuben Ellis, and Philip Phillips, were chosen assessors for the town of Ashfield to make a province tax, and having been ordered by the general court not to tax a settled minister, Ephraim Marble and Reuben Ellis left the Baptist minister out of the tax. Then Philip Phillips complained to Court of Quarter Sessions of being overtaxed and a summons was sent to the other two assessors to appear at court, held in Springfield in May, 1762. When the case came up for trial, said court would not allow the assessors to bring proof of said minister's settlement, and ruled that, if the assessors proved the ordination of said minister, he would not be free from paying taxes. The court placed four pounds charges upon the assessors and refused to allow them an appeal to the Superior Court. (of judicature), ruling there was no appeal in that case; consequently the assessors were obliged to bear the burden laid upon them. Colonel Israel Williams of Hatfield was the chief justice of this court. Statement signed by Ebenezer Smith and Reuben Ellis, asserting they were eye witnesses, having been present in court. Hdw. 3 pp. 6 x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 558-560.)

100. (PETITION OF BAPTIST CHURCH FOR EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN MINISTERIAL TAXES), Feb. 9, 1770. 1 sheet.

Petition of the Baptist Church and Society in Ashfield to Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson, council, and house of representatives, stating that they settled in Ashfield in the manner set forth in their petition (entry 93), dated May 24, 1768; wherein they requested to be freed from paying taxes for the maintenance of a meetinghouse and minister of a society to which they did not belong; and according to a court order the petitioners notified the town and proprietors' clerks by giving them a copy of said petition, and an order of said court suspending further collection of taxes until the following spring sitting of the court; notwithstanding, the other proprietors posted petitioners' lands for sale and assembled to sell same, but said proprietors, finding they had made a mistake in their proceedings, put off the sale to another time. The petitioners sent a man to Boston last May to get further help, but matters were in such a chaotic condition he returned before any business was done. There is a tax of eleven pounds, eighteen shillings, and seven pence laid on each right in town, chiefly for support of a minister and for building a meetinghouse for the above-named society. The petitioners' lands were posted to be sold the first Wednesday in April unless the tax was paid; the petitioners, being unable to pay the tax, see nothing before them but to be disinherited for support of a society to which they did not belong. Thus the petitioners prayed the court to take their case into consideration and free them and their lands from paying the said tax or any other for the above-said society's support; also petitioners desired that money already paid for maintenance and support for the other society's meetinghouse be restored to them. The petitioners stated that their society needed a meetinghouse and would have built one some years ago had it not been for the burdens so unjustly laid upon them. Signed by Ebenezer Smith, John Blackmer, and Aaron Lyon in behalf of the church and society. Fdw. 1 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", p. 556.)

101. (RESOLVE OF GENERAL COURT REGARDING PETITION OF ANABAPTIST SOCIETY), Apr. 3, 1770. 1 sheet.

Resolve of house of representatives, April 3, 1770, on petition of the Anabaptist Society and Church of Ashfield: That petitioners notify the proprietors of lands in Ashfield by serving the clerk of said proprietors with a copy of said petition, that said proprietors may appear at the next sitting of the general court to show cause, if any, why said petitioners' prayer should not be granted; that the sale of said petitioners' lands be stayed in the meantime. Read in the council, April 4, 1770, nonconcurrent, and ordered that said petition be dismissed. In council, April 7, 1770, the board resumed consideration of said petition and passed above resolve in concurrence with the amendment "provided the same had not already been sold." Read in house of representatives, April 7, 1770, nonconcurrent, and ordered that said petition be tabled. The house of representatives, April 10, 1770, resumed consideration of said petition and resolved that the petitioners notify the proprietors of lands in Ashfield of said petition and the paper called "An Account of the Sufferings of the Church in Ashfield", by serving the clerk of said proprietors

101. (RESOLVE OF GENERAL COURT REGARDING PETITION OF ANABAPTIST SOCIETY), (Cont'd)

with a copy of said petition and paper, that the proprietors may show cause at the next May sitting of the general court why petitioners' prayer should not be granted; that the sale of petitioners' lands be stayed in the meantime. Read in council, April 10, 1770, and concurred. Consented to, April 26, 1770, by (Governor Thomas) Hutchinson. Hdw. 2 p. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 564-A, 564-B.)

102. (PETITION OF THE BAPTIST COMMITTEE ON GRIEVANCES), Nov. 14, 1770. 2 sheets.

Petition of the committee, appointed by the Baptist churches, to the Lieutenant Governor, council, and house of representatives, praying for the court's friendly legislative interposition that their brethren be saved from threatening ruin and disquietude of mind arising from some of the laws of this province, ecclesiastical in nature, which deprive the Baptists of the privileges granted in the charter, especially one law made in favor of the proprietors of the town of Ashfield which supersedes all acts of the general court. The petitioners stated that in consequence of said law any by a power granted to the proprietors of Ashfield, three hundred and ninety-eight acres of the Ashfield Baptists' land had been sold to build a meetinghouse and settle a minister of another faith; that part of said land belonged to the Reverend Ebenezer Smith, who, with his father and others, built a fort at their own expense, and were a frontier for two years during the Indian war; that part of said land had been laid out into a burying ground; that on account of another provision in the above-mentioned law of the general court no Baptist can avail himself even of that law, in newly settled towns, thus virtually preventing settling of Baptists in such towns. Therefore petitioners ask that the general court relieve their distress by repealing the law entitled "An Act in Addition to an Act for Erecting the Plantation called Huntstown into a Town by the Name of Ashfield"; that the Baptists' lands which were taken from them for support of a minister of another faith be returned to them; that the Baptists be awarded damages for injuries suffered, thus enabling their brethren in different parts of the province to recover losses made to sustain them on religious account; that perpetual exemption be granted all Baptists and their congregations for all ministerial taxes to the full intent and meaning of the charter of the province, that all taxes paid heretofore be disannulled on any of the Baptists. Signed by Sam Stillman, Hugh Smith, and John Davis for the committee. Read in house of representatives, November 14, 1770, and ordered that proprietors of the town of Ashfield be notified by serving the proprietors' clerk with a copy of the petition, that they may show cause why prayer should not be granted; and all further proceedings of the act entitled "An Act in Addition to an Act for Erecting the New Plantation Called Huntstown into a Town by Name of Ashfield", be stayed. Read in council, November 15, 1770, and concurred. Read again in council, April 17, 1771, together with answer, and ordered that William Brattle and William Sever and such as the house shall join be a committee to take same into consideration, hear parties, and report what is proper to be

102. (PETITION OF THE BAPTIST COMMITTEE ON GRIEVANCES), (Cont'd) done. Read in house of representatives, April 17, 1771, and concurred and Captain Barnes, Mr. Akin, and Mr. Ingersol of Westfield be joined in the affair. Hdw. 4 pp. 9 x 15. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 592-595.)

103. (REPLY OF PROPRIETORS OF ASHFIELD TO PETITION OF BAPTIST COMMITTEE ON GRIEVANCE), Mar. 27, 1771. 4 sheets.

Reply of the proprietors of Ashfield to Governor Thomas Hutchinson, council, and house of representatives concerning petition of the Anabaptist Committee of Grievance, in which said proprietors stated the religious and educational background of said Baptists and their reasons for establishing and becoming a part of said sect; they also stated that many of the representations made by the Baptists are both unfair and false, and that taxes, for obtaining which the Baptists' lands were sold, were raised for purposes in which said Baptists were equally with the other proprietors bound to see accomplished; that in the accomplishing of said acts, the Baptists, as a body and as individuals, profited; that it would be unfair and unjust to order restitution or damages according to the Baptists' prayer; therefor the respondents trust governor and general court will not grant that part of the said petition. Hdw. 8 pp. 8 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 596-603.)

104. (REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COURT TO CONSIDER PETITION OF BAPTIST GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE), Apr. 24, 1771. 3 sheets.

The committee appointed by the general court to consider the petition of Messrs. Stillman, Smith, and Davis, having heard the parties report as follows: That whereas the petitioners complain they have been arbitrarily deprived of their estates, the committee feels it is right so to do when the wills and consciences of said petitioners are opposed to fulfilling the conditions of their grant; the committee also feels that the general court has made sundry laws for relief of the Baptists, and the committee would recommend any additional relief for said Baptists which would be consistent with the laws of God or man; therefore the committee asked Reverend Mr. Davis to report in writing the desires of his society in order that the committee might lay them before the court. In 1735 upon a petition of Ebenezer Hunt and others, the court granted said petitioners a township six miles square, and ordered that said town be laid out into sixty-three equal shares for public use; said court also ordered that on each of the sixty shares the petitioners should, within three years of said grant, settle one family, build a house, establish a learned orthodox minister and a convenient meetinghouse; each settler was required to give a bond to the province for fulfilling said conditions of grant and all lots upon which the conditions of said grant were not fulfilled were to be at disposition of the province. In 1765 the plantation was erected into a town by the name of Ashfield, wherein it was enacted that all taxes raised for maintenance of a minister and building a meetinghouse be levied on the several proprietors according to their interests; an additional act provided for the sale of any proprietor's land where said conditions were not fulfilled; thus the committee found that no unfairness was shown in the

104. (REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL COURT TO CONSIDER PETITION OF BAPTIST GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE), (Cont'd)

sale of the petitioners' lands, but every transaction was fair, neighborly, and legal; the committee though desirous of doing everything possible for persons of every denomination of Christians, for reasons before mentioned, are of the opinion that the petition be dismissed. Signature of W. Brattle for committee. Read in house of representatives, April 24, 1771, accepted, and ordered petition be dismissed. Read in house of representatives, April 25, 1771, and nonconcurrent, and ordered that Mr. Denny, Colonel Bowers, and Mr. Ingersol of Great Barrington with such others as the Board shall join, bring in a bill for repealing and making void an act made and passed in the eighth year of the present majesty's reign entitled "An Act in Addition to an Act for Erecting the New Plantation Called Huntstown into a Town by Name of Ashfield". Read in council, April 25, 1771, and nonconcurrent. Hdw. 5 pp. 8 x 12¹/₂. (XIV, "Ecclesiastical, 1757-1774", pp. 604-608.)

105. (LETTER FROM GOVERNOR THOMAS HUTCHINSON TO EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH), Oct. 18, 1771. 1 sheet.

Governor acknowledges receipt of His Majesty's order disallowing an act passed by general assembly of the province entitled "An Act in Addition to an Act, Entitled an Act for Erecting the New Plantation Called Huntstown, in the County of Hampshire, into a Town by Name of Ashfield", and acknowledges his having given public notification that all persons concerned govern themselves accordingly. Hdw. 1 p. 7¹/₂ x 15¹/₂. (XXVII, "Hutchinson's Letters, 1770-74", p. 248.)

106. (REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COURT ON LAND SALES ADJUSTMENT), April 22, 1772. 2 sheets.

The committee represented by Timothy Woodbridge found that notwithstanding previous taxes, several of the proprietors of Ashfield are still in arrears 463 pounds and 16 shillings which the proprietors owe to several persons for services to the propriety; also that the proprietors had, in accordance with grant, set up a meetinghouse and settled a worthy minister, Reverend Mr. Sherwin; that said minister had not received his salary for past several years due to lack of funds on account of large expenditures for lawsuits respecting boundaries, and making and maintaining highways. Since there were 75 families settled in said town, many of the Baptist persuasion and both denominations poor, the committee was of the opinion that because the land sold in 1763, 1764, 1765 was uncultivated, the sale be made valid; the proprietors whose land was sold in 1770 should be allowed to redeem same by payment of their taxes and costs of sale, with interest, returning any overplus received, provided such lands were in the hands of the original purchaser, or unless a subsequent purchaser released his claim to the same; that if proprietors neglect or refuse to redeem land sold in 1770, said sales shall be confirmed to the purchasers as valid; also that a tax of two pence per acre be laid on lands in the township of Ashfield for three years, to pay arrears due to said proprietors; and in consideration of inhabitants being poor and in debt that they be excused from government and county taxes for three years; that the inhabitants, exclusive of the Baptists, finish constructing the

106. (REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COURT ON LAND SALES
ADJUSTMENT), (Cont'd)

meetinghouse, and hereafter support Reverend Mr. Sherwin. Read in council, April 22, 1772, and sent down. In house of representatives, April 23, 1772, on petition of proprietors of Ashfield, resolved that consideration of same, together with report of Timothy Woodbridge and others, committee appointed by general court to inquire into proceedings of proprietors and grievances, be referred to next session of court and further resolved that all processes, law suits, etc., brought against said proprietors be suspended until that time. Read and concurred in council, April 23, 1772. Read again in council, June 5, 1772, and ordered that Colonel Otis and Mr. Phillips with such as shall be joined in house be a committee to consider same, hear parties, and report what may be proper to be done thereon. Read and concurred in house of representatives, June 6, 1772, and Colonel Williams of Pittsfield, Mr. Sprague, and Colonel Whitcomb be joined. Read and concurred in council, June 6, 1772. Hdw. 3 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVIII, "Towns, 1763-1774", pp. 575-577.)

107. (DECISION OF COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO CONSIDER REPORT OF LAND
SALES COMMITTEE), June 25, 1772. 2 sheets.

Committee appointed to take into consideration the report of the committee of the general court which went to Ashfield in September, have examined that report, heard the parties, and report the following resolves as taken into a new draft: That land sales made in 1763, 1764, 1765 by assessors or committee for said sales in Ashfield for payment of taxes be deemed valid; that all proprietors whose lands were sold for payment of taxes by assessors chosen in 1769 and by them sold in 1770 shall be empowered, if so inclined, to redeem same by paying their taxes and costs arising from said sales with interest, and returning any overplus; and if any proprietors whose lands were sold in 1770 neglect or refuse to redeem same within three months, said sales shall be confirmed; provided, that Chileab Smith's lands be exempt from said provision, since his lands were sold thru error; that in case of dispute in actions to reclaim land sold in 1770, a committee be empowered to determine sum to be paid, judgment of two of the three to be final; that a tax of 2 pence an acre be levied on all land in said town, the public lands and lands of Baptists excepted, for three years, to enable proprietors to pay their debts and fulfill conditions of grant; that to relieve the poverty and distressed circumstances of the inhabitants of Ashfield, they be exempted from paying the province and county taxes for three years to come; that the inhabitants, exclusive of the Baptists, be at the expense of finishing the meetinghouse and in the future support Reverend Mr. Sherwin. Read in council, June 25, 1772, and sent down. Read in house of representatives, June 26, 1772, and recommitted. The committee on July 1, 1772 report they have reconsidered foregoing report and desire leave to report as by the bill herewith reported; signature of James Otis for the committee. Read in council, July 1, 1772, and sent down. Hdw. 3 pp. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$. (CXVIII, "Towns, 1763-74", pp. 578-580.)

108. (AN ACT APPOINTING A COMMITTEE FOR ADJUSTING LAND SALES),
Feb. 5, 1773. 2 sheets.

Whereas doubts have arisen concerning the validity of the sales of lands of such as were called delinquent proprietors of the Township of Ashfield in the County of Hampshire, made by the assessors or committees of proprietors of said township for the years 1763, 1764, 1765, and actions are now pending in law for recovering the possession of said lands from persons who purchased the same or are now holders; and whereas it will tend to cause great disquietness to said township if such sales should be judged invalid and insufficient in law, be it resolved: That George Leonard Jr., Jedediah Foster, and Mr. Thomas Denny be a committee fully authorized to go to said town and hear the committee of the proprietors and also each of the persons or the representatives of said persons whose lands have been sold in the years and manner aforesaid; said committee shall judge and determine what the lands thus sold were truly worth at the time of the sales, over and above the sums for which they were in fact sold, together with all the damages which may have actually accrued to each proprietor resulting from said sale; the committee will make a report of their doings at the next session of this court in May next that order may then be taken for establishing and rendering valid said sales, or such action as the court deems just and equitable; all proceedings in the law grounded upon the invalidity of such sales are stayed in the meantime; said committee shall give public notice in all Boston newspapers of the time and place of meeting, that all interested persons may attend. Passed by house of representatives, February 4, 1773. Read in council, February 5, 1773, and concurred. Consented to by (Governor) T(homas) Hutchinson. Edw. 3 pp. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8. (CXVIII, "Towns, 1763-1774", pp. 672, 673, 673A.)

For a printed version of this act, see Province Acts and Resolves, XVIII, pp. 681, 682.

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Vol. III Buckland, (ii, 36 pp. mim. 1940).

No. 11 Norfolk County

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No. 14 Worcester County

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